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CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA

J. O. P. BLAND

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B. T. Prideaux]

[Frontispiece

DAWN ON THE CHIANTANG RIVER, CHEKIANG.

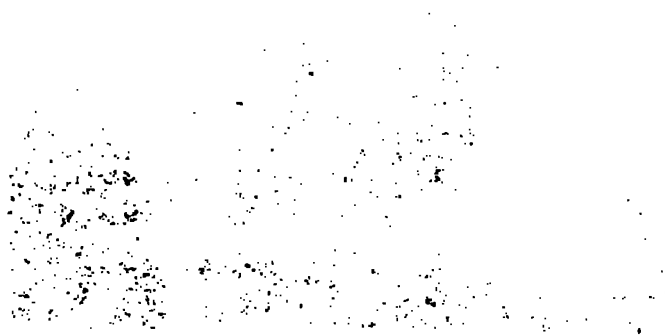
"The moving homes of men whose lives are as the lives of their forefathers."

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CHINA JAPAN AND KOREA

BY
J. O. P. BLAND

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1921



The Author and Publishers desire to express their thanks to Mr. B. T. Prideaux, of Shanghai, for allowing them to use his beautiful photographs in the illustrations of this book.

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The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organise faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force ; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community. . . . However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterward the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.—From Washington's Farewell Address.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IN a book published at the end of 1912,¹ the year of the abdication of the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Republic, I endeavoured to trace the causes, and to predict some of the results, of that upheaval. Before proceeding to discuss the history of the eight years which have elapsed since that book was written, I propose to revert briefly to some of the views which it expressed and to some of the opinions which it evoked, in China and abroad. Eight years are all too brief a space of time in the life of a nation to afford any conclusive evidence as to the direction of its political evolution; nevertheless, the course of events since 1912, and the actual position of affairs at Peking and in the provinces afford, I think, good ground for certain useful conclusions in regard to questions upon which opinion has widely differed, and still differs, in England and America.

Of these, the most important is, firstly, the general question of the fitness of the Chinese people for self-government; and, secondly, the question of Young China's aspirations and achievements in the organisation and working of representative institutions.

I do not propose to recapitulate here the causes of the Chinese revolution of 1911-12; the truth is now generally recognised, I believe, that these causes were fundamentally economic rather than political, and that, until the social system of the Chinese people shall have been modified by process of education, the acute pressure of population upon means of subsistence, which results

¹ *Recent Events and Present Policies in China.*

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from that system, must continue to be an ever-recurring source of unrest and strife. It is also generally recognised that under these conditions, no matter what names and shapes authority may assume, the Chinese can never hope to be quietly and orderly governed, unless and until the Central Government is strong enough to keep in check, by force, the ever-latent elements of disorder. All over the world, and most noticeably since the War, men are being led to perceive that the increasing pressure of population upon the food resources of the planet, constitutes civilisation's gravest problem and the paramount cause of world unrest. In China, the social fabric is, comparatively speaking, so simple, that the connection between cause and effect is swift and unmistakable when pestilence or famine decimate whole provinces. A few observers there are who, while admitting the severity of the economic pressure which has made Chinese history for centuries a series of cataclysms, still profess to believe that it may be relieved by expedients, such as emigration, the scientific development of mines, or the improvement of agriculture. But, generally speaking, the truth appears to be realised that, even if it were possible to obtain temporary alleviation by any or all of these means, the fundamental problem would still remain unsolved, the application of the law of population being merely deferred, and its results aggravated, by such expedients, unless accompanied by a reduction of the birth-rate.

The views which I ventured to put forward in 1912 concerning the permanent causes of unrest, and incidentally of the revolution, in China, naturally appealed with greater force to Europeans there resident than to observers and students of Chinese affairs at a distance. Many of the latter, unfortunately, are by temperament or vocation disposed to believe in the efficacy of political formulæ or religious beliefs to relieve society of the penalties of its collective ignorance or collective folly, and attach small importance to economics. For a certain

very prevalent class of rhapsodists and idealists, the experience of a thousand yesterdays is always as nought compared with to-morrow's vision of the Promised Land. Show them, by weight of indisputable evidence gathered from trustworthy sources, that in the East no magic virtue of regeneration proceeds from the blessed words "Democracy" and "Republic," prove to them that the so-called Parliamentarians have reduced the political status of China to the level of San Domingo, they will denounce you as a reactionary, urge you to have more faith, and proceed to proclaim with increased fervour the application of their infallible panaceas.

Writing in 1912, while the Republic was still in the making, I observed that no stable form of government could possibly be evolved from the materials at Young China's disposal. The reasons for this belief were given, as follows :—

"Remembering the ancestry and genesis of Young China, being personally acquainted with many of its leading spirits, having followed its operations and activities in every province from the beginning of the present revolution, I am compelled to the conviction that salvation from this quarter is impossible, not only because Young China itself is unregenerate and undisciplined, but because its ideals and projects of government involve the creation of a new social and political structure utterly unsuited to the character and traditions of the race; because it is contrary to all experience that a people cut off from its deep-rooted beliefs and habits of life should develop and retain a vigorous national consciousness."

Another passage summarised the actual position created by the collapse of the Manchu Government's authority, as follows :—

"The army, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, has already repudiated Young China; the horde of hungry politicians remains absorbed in futile arguments and sordid intrigues; the Government is without prestige, policy or power; three parties in the State, alike

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forgetful of their country's urgent needs, struggle for place and pelf; the Cabinet is distracted by the advice of amateur politicians at the capital and the threats and protests of the provinces."

These opinions were naturally denounced with great vehemence by Young China in the vernacular Press, and challenged by more than one vocational optimist amongst the foreign advisers of the Chinese Government. They were also freely criticised by certain writers, notably in America, who had discovered, in Sun Yat-sen and his ready-made Republic, Heaven-sent proof of the saving grace of democratic principles. The *Daily News*, for example, quoted with approval the opinion of a well-known Oriental scholar, who, writing from Peking in November 1912, said :—

"The influence of men like Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing has tended to effect a *rapprochement* between the Nationalists and President Yuan Shih-k'ai, to the great improvement of the situation. The position here has improved to an extraordinary extent."

A month later the *Christian Science Monitor* of Boston, U.S.A., severely criticising my views, gave a glowing account of the preparations which it seriously believed were then a-foot in China for "the elections for the first National Parliament." Its picture of political activities under the Republic is worth reproducing, not only because of its earnest absurdity, but because, in spite of all that has since happened, the same sort of nonsense is still being written by the incurable theorists who insist that the East is bound to derive moral and material benefits from adopting the political institutions of the West.

Wrote the Editor of the *Monitor* :—

"Sharply contrasted with the pessimistic predictions of Mr. Bland, whilom representative of the London *Times* in Peking, now giving a series of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston, are the hopeful comments of the Chinese Press and public men on the course of events

during the first year of the Republic. . . . Unless our sources of information are much distorted, the twelve-month has disclosed both Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shih-k'ai as large enough to subordinate themselves and their ambitions to performing genuine national duties, one as a peripatetic teacher of racial unity throughout the provinces, and the other as provisional President, handling diverse domestic and international problems with sagacity and patience. No mere novices or doctrinaires are in power at Peking, as Mr. Bland would have the American public believe. . . . Evidently they err who think the Chinese ill-adapted to deal with principles and methods of government. The papers of State issued at Peking to-day not only lack most of the former ornateness of phrasing and absurdity of excuse for official lapses which often used to make the Imperial Decrees as ludicrous as they were cruel; these papers are now straightforward, logical, and impressive in their vital dealings with concrete needs of the people."

Many visions of the new Chinese Arcadia were vouchsafed at this period. Here is one proclaimed by Mr. Hua Chuen-mei, Secretary of the China Society of America, in an article published by the *New York Tribune* in January 1913:—

"Since the establishment of the Republic, all the officials of the country have been fulfilling their administrative and judicial functions, and commerce and industry have been resumed with added eagerness and enterprise. Every branch of civil life has been, or is being, reconstituted or modified to accord with the new national spirit. The people as a whole are content and pleased with the Government they have ordained, because even in the short space of a twelvemonth, that Government has demonstrated its honesty, its efficiency, and its loyalty to the national ideals. . . .

"In the fall of 1911, when the revolutionary armies in the Yangtze Valley raised the standard of republicanism against monarchism, China had found herself. The enthusiasm for popular sovereignty spread like wild prairie fire. The eighteen mutually jealous provinces under the Manchu régime now ceased to be divided.

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The movement for a series of independent States was promptly thrown overboard, and the people of all China eagerly and without coercion fell into line, first to oust the Manchu, then to establish representative Government. . . .

" . . . The people of China had spoken loud and unmistakably in favour of the democratic principle of Government. Besides, the form of republicanism, long ago communicated by American merchants and missionaries and by the Chinese students educated in American institutions of learning, had already universally infected the people, and as the years passed, the symptoms of a wider consciousness of popular rights developed into a veritable contagious disease for national freedom and enfranchisement."

I have quoted the above, not only because of its melancholy retrospective interest, but because it is typical of the windy ullage with which the Young China of Western learning still regales its admirers abroad; typical of the kind of bread which returns to us, after many days, cast by the hand of error upon the waters of delusion.¹

It is only fair to say that public opinion abroad during the first years of the Republic was powerfully influenced by the consistently optimistic views of the late Dr. Morrison, the famous *Times* correspondent, who became an adviser to the Chinese Government in 1912. Dr. Morrison's sympathies were instinctively with the foreign-educated section of Young China, and in spite of many disillusiones, he clung to his genial belief that it would eventually produce leaders imbued with disinterested patriotism and constructive statesmanship. His indomitable optimism and loyalty to those whom he served, led him to turn a tolerant, not to say a blind eye, to the seamy side of Chinese politics, and to emphasise their bright spots. Thus in the winter of 1912, his views on

¹ Dr. Wellington Koo, lately Chinese Minister at Washington, put it even more artistically, when he said, "In reconstructing her government on the principle of sovereignty vested in the people as a body, China has thrown autocracy overboard and is putting her house in order under the aegis of democracy."

the situation, published as an interview in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and circulated broadcast, were of a nature to encourage confidence in the future, if only because of the worthy doctor's world-wide reputation. As the *Spectator* observed :—

“ Dr. Morrison's vision of China is radiant. Trade has reached a record; the soldiers who used to prey upon the country when dismissed penniless from the army, now receive their pay and become quiet and useful citizens; no one desires the return of the Manchus, because every one knows the difference between gross rapacity and a sincere attempt to govern decently; daily newspapers and cheaper telegrams carry enlightenment throughout the land, the Christian calendar has been officially adopted, and Sunday is recognised as a day of rest; and oil, by the genial light of which newspapers can be read in the long, dark evenings, has brought a moral illumination into the lives of the people, since they are no longer driven to the solacing distraction of opium.”

It is also necessary to remember, in judging these opinions retrospectively, that political economy is a dreary science; that there is no delusion so prevalent as belief in the miracle of a nation re-born and structurally changed by means of a revolution; and that the enthusiasms born of that belief are always keen and contagious. He who, moved by the emotion of such enthusiasm, discerns the splendid dawn of a new era, may be absolved if his vision is surcharged with *couleur de rose*. But when the dream-castles of that dawn have vanished in the clear light of day, a heavy responsibility rests with those who, either as zealots or as optimists *de métier*, continue to proclaim their solid virtues.

During the first two years of the Republic, the British Press as a whole shared the prevalent enthusiasm for the new era, to the extent that it was generally prepared to suspend its verdict as to the merits and capacity of Young China, and to judge the tree by its fruits. As a reviewer in the *Spectator* put it (December 7, 1912) :—

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"If it were safe to surrender oneself entirely to the voice of authority in judging of Chinese affairs to-day, we should be guided unhesitatingly by Mr. Bland. But just now authority speaks with a divided voice. There is Dr. Morrison, for instance, who is as confident about the future of China as Mr. Bland is doubtful. Professor Reinsch¹ also inclines to the side of the optimists."

At the same time, the English Press, better informed concerning foreign affairs than the majority of American papers, was never greatly impressed by the eloquence of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and by many it was felt that a grave responsibility was incurred by those missionaries and other well-meaning enthusiasts who had advised and encouraged Young China to believe, or at least to proclaim, that the solution of their country's dangers and difficulties was to be found in the adoption of a Republican form of Government. Thus, speaking of Sun Yat-sen, the *Observer* said (December 8, 1912):—

"To the support which the outer world gave to this unpractical theoriser, are due the facts that the Chinese Republic stands upon a base of sand, that the moderate men are looking forward to the re-establishment of a monarchy, the army to a military despotism or extended anarchy, the provinces to autonomy, and the robber Powers around China to spoliation on a scale even bigger than has hitherto been possible. Young China's friends have served the honest members of the party badly, by persuading Europe and America to accept as genuine the elaborate sham which has been erected, by talking of the solidity of the Republic and the acquiescence of the people."

In a special review of "Recent Events and Present Policies in China," published in the *Nineteenth Century* for May 1913, Earl Cromer observed:—

"We English are largely responsible for creating the frame of mind which is even now luring Young Turks,

¹ Formerly American Minister at Peking; now financial adviser to the Chinese Government in New York.

Chinamen, and other Easterns into the political wilderness by the display of false signals. We have, indeed, our Blands in China, our Milners in Egypt, our Miss Durhams in the Balkan Peninsula, and our Miss Bells in Mesopotamia, who wander far a-field, gleaning valuable facts and laying before their countrymen conclusions based on acquired knowledge and wide experience. But their efforts are only partially successful. They are often shivered on the solid rock of preconceived prejudice and genuine but ill-informed sentimentalism. A large section of the English public are, in fact, singularly wanting in political imagination. Although they would not, in so many words, admit the truth of the statement, they none the less act and speak as if sound national development in whatsoever quarter of the world, must of necessity proceed along their own conventional, insular, and time-honoured lines, and along those lines alone."

A little later Earl Cromer wrote to me:—

"I am very glad you liked my paper in the *Nineteenth Century*; it represents my sincere convictions. Although I do not possess any local knowledge of Chinese affairs, I have very little doubt that your forecast will turn out to be correct, only, as not infrequently happens with prophets, you will very likely have to wait some while before your prophecies are fulfilled. As a rule, people who see clearly into a general situation are rather apt to under-rate the time required for political evolution. The *locus classicus* on this subject is the case of De Tocqueville, who, in the very early days, cast an extraordinarily accurate horoscope of the course which would be run by the Second Empire, but it took seventeen years before events proved how correct he had been."

When Earl Cromer wrote of the "genuine but ill-informed sentimentalism" which had led certain classes of Englishmen to sow seeds of unrest amongst Oriental peoples, he was judging from the results of his own experience and observation in the Near East. In China, our faddists, fanatics, and intellectual Bolsheviks have, no doubt, done their bit, but on the whole the influences which have created the most mischief, by breeding a spirit of indiscipline and sedition among the younger

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generation of *litterati*, and by encouraging political alarms and excursions in the name of democracy, have been more American than English. It is worthy of note in this connection that, now that the chickens of this particular error are coming home to roost, it is from the same intellectual sources that emanate the latest warnings of the Yellow Peril, the American Vision of Pan-Asia, "welded into a common solidarity of feeling against the Dominant White Man," of the white race swamped in "the rising tide of colour," and civilisation wiped out "by the imperious urge of the coloured world towards racial expansion!"¹ Thus, at the present moment, while one group of well-meaning enthusiasts is fervently advocating the abolition of the foreigner's extra-territorial rights in China, as a matter of abstract justice, another group of equally sympathetic advisers sees no remedy for the existing chaos but the application of strict foreign supervision, not only to China's finances, but to her internal political machinery!²

I would ask the reader to believe that, in thus referring to the part played by foreign sympathisers and advisers during the period immediately following the Revolution, I have no wish to flourish the prophet's mantle, or to drag coat-tails of complacency. My purpose in traversing this old ground is two-fold. Firstly, to emphasise the fact that those who have encouraged the Western-learning "Intellectuals" of Young China to apply their ill-digested text-book theories to the business of government, have incurred serious responsibility and wrought much mischief. (It must, I think, be admitted that if the disastrous experiments of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his followers had not been supported by Europeans on the spot, and by the sympathy of public opinion abroad, their career would have been brief, Yuan Shih-k'ai

¹ Vide *The Rising Tide of Colour*, by Lothrop Stoddard. Scribners.

² Vide *Modern Constitutional Development in China*, by Harold M. Vinacke. Princetown University Press.

would have succeeded in restoring something like law and order, and the present chaos of strife and corruption would have been to a great extent averted.) Secondly, I desire to show that, notwithstanding the parlous results achieved by Young China's politicians in the name of Democracy, there is still a tendency, in certain quarters (especially where "moral uplift" is combined with a shrewd business instinct), to apply the old *couleur de rose* and to create a very misleading impression abroad as to the actual condition of affairs in the Far East, thus encouraging the self-constituted rulers of China in the belief that responsible opinion in America and Europe sympathises with their theories, and sanctions their practices, of government.

I have spoken of the optimist *de métier*. I know of no more striking example of the pernicious nonsense with which Young China has been fed and misled, than "the semi-official statement of China's case to the world," published by Mr. Putnam Weale in 1918, under the title *The Fight for the Republic in China*. When this book was written, the northern Military Party, subsidised by Japan, had just succeeded in defeating General Chang Hsün's attempt to restore the Monarchy and his own fortunes, and in the collapse of this farcical *coup d'état*, Mr. Weale found welcome proof of the devotion of the Anfu faction to the principles of enlightened Liberalism. Once again, whilst lawlessness stalked red-handed through the plundered land, and proofs multiplied on every hand that the so-called democracy had become more flagrantly venal than ever before, he descried the dawn of a new era, in which the world would "welcome China to the family of nations, not only on terms of equality, but as a representative of Liberalism and a subscriber to all those sanctions on which the civilisation of peace rests." He predicted that "within a limited period, Parliamentary Government would be more successful in China than in some European countries," and "something very similar to the Anglo-Saxon theory of

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Government impregnably entrenched in Peking." In his opinion, "the marvellous revolution of 1911 had given back to this ancient race its old position of leader of ideas on the shores of the Yellow Sea." Finally, he expressed the confident belief, "based on a knowledge of all the facts," that China would shortly achieve "a united Government and a cessation of internecine strife." The whole tenour of his writing was such as to encourage the world at large to see in the sordid strife of politicians like Tuan Chi-jui, Chang Hsün, Sun Yat-sen, and Tang Shao-yi, a conflict of high principles, from which an enlightened democracy was emerging, with healing in its wings. "The new China," he declared, "is a matter of life and death to the people, and the first business of the foreigner is to uphold the new beliefs." For those who fill highly-paid posts as advisers under the Chinese Government, this may be so, but for the majority of foreigners in the East, the "new beliefs," as manifested by the mandarins and military chieftains of the new dispensation, are an alien and parasitic growth, which threatens to paralyse the ancient and venerable tree of Chinese civilisation.

Mr. Weale's book was written before the world had witnessed Russia's appalling demonstration of the truth that when a nation unfitted for representative government is cast into the melting-pot of "red" revolution, an unprofitable scum rises to the top, and that the consequences for the man in the street are very different from those predicted by the Intellectual harbingers of the millennium. The world has witnessed the disillusion of the honest dreamers who believed that the Russian nation and its government would be purged of evil by the abolition of the autocracy; if China's affairs were not beyond its normal ken, it would know that here also, as in Russia, the patriotic Intellectuals have been put to silence and shame by the professional agitator and the place-seeker. Almost before Mr. Weale's book was published, the course of events at Peking had revealed

something of the real nature of the "civilisation of peace" to be expected from the contending political factions, for General Chang Hsün had been whitewashed (for value received) and orders had been issued by the President for the arrest of Sun Yat-sen and other Cantonese malcontents.

The present brief study of the actual condition of affairs in the Far East is based generally on observation of the conditions existing early in 1920. At the time of my visit to Peking, in February, the storm was brewing, which eventually led to the overthrow of Marshall Tuan Chi-jui, "Little Hsü," and the Japanese-subsidised "Anfu" clique by General Wu Pei-fu and the Chihli faction, to a heavy bill of costs by the military commanders, and a redistribution of the spoils of office. As usual, professional and amateur apologists for the "world made safe for democracy," vied with each other in proclaiming that the defeat of Tuan and his friends assuredly meant the end of false dawns, and that General Wu Pei-fu, with his National Convention, would inaugurate the long-expected new era. Well, Tuan bowed in due course to the superior forces brought to bear against him and went his dignified way into lucrative retirement; the National Convention was speedily forgotten in the turmoil of new intrigues amongst the victors, and to-day the Directors of the Southern Parliament still refuse to be persuaded to come into the Northern fold, and still accuse the Northern leaders of selling their country's birthright for a mess of Japanese pottage. .

In the meantime, while the politicians fight for place and power, what of the destinies of the common people, in whose name and for whose alleged benefit the contending factions appeal to the world at large? The sorrows and sufferings to which the "stupid people" have been exposed during the past ten years are very seldom mentioned by the apologists of misrule, and the Chinese Parliamentarians are more concerned in discussing the forms and proceedings of their embryo

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Constitution than in relieving the miseries of provinces decimated by brigandage and famine. These things are lightly dismissed, or described as the inevitable condition of a race inured to such calamities since the beginning of time. The world will never know the nature and extent of the sufferings endured by the common people throughout China since the passing of the Manchu dynasty, nor will any census reveal the number of those who have "gone to their graves like beds." While Europe was at war, the affairs of the inarticulate East concerned us less than usual; and even to-day, when millions are silently dying of famine in North China, we hear more of Sun Yat-sen's latest political manifestoes than of measures for the prevention of these catastrophes. Your optimist *de métier* points triumphantly to the fact that China's foreign trade for the past year constitutes a record, and from this fact he proceeds to draw conclusions reassuring for the bond-holder and comfortable for the worthy people who like to believe that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

From the chapters of the present work which deal with China, the reader may learn something of the condition of affairs in the summer of 1920, and be able to form his own opinion as to the material and moral benefits which the Chinese people have derived from the attempt of the revolutionaries of 1911 to adapt to their use and for their own advantage the political institutions of the West. But in order to make the story more complete in detail, and to bring it more fully up to date, let me supplement it with certain recent extracts from the *North China Herald*.

Here, for example, are the Index headings of *Outport News*, as given in the issue of November 15, 1920. (It is to be observed that most of the *Herald's* inland correspondents are missionaries):—

Kuangsi expelled from Canton.

North Kiangsu notes; the burden of the soldiers.

Malcontents of Changsha.
Szechuan's dramatic victory.
Independence Day in Szechuan.
Celebrating the Victory in Szechuan.
Stranded missionaries in Szechuan.
The Bandit Tyrant of Pakhoi.
The new Bank in Tsinanfu.
Yangchow notes : sacrifice for famine sufferers.
Skirmish with Robbers.
The Upper Yangtze revisited.
Threatened rising of Tibetans.
Hangchow notes : inter-College Sports.
By the Yellow River in Mongolia.
Teachers on strike in Honan.
Slavery non-existent in Hongkong.
Soldiers' requisitions in Hunan.
Unwelcome visitors in Kweichow.
Mr. Colvil's death (killed by Chinese troops).
College Principal beaten by Students.
Mr. Shaw released.
Scandalous state of the River Han.
Japanese Seamen's Combine.
Pirate raid near Soochow.
Hongkong's need of wireless.
The Great Famine in North China.
Motors in Anhui.
New American Church in Shaohsing.
China and Socialism.
Piracy near Hongkong.

I venture to suggest that this list presents a picture of the actual conditions of affairs in China, of the prevailing lawlessness and brigandage and famine, more convincing than all the visions of Utopia provided by Peking's political pundits.

Under the heading "The Upper Yangtze revisited," occurs the following note concerning the opium traffic, interesting in the light of the many virtuous manifestoes

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that have been, and are still being, published on the subject by the Radical Republican leaders :—

“ The great increase of the contraband opium trade was the cause of frequent comment on the Upper Yangtze. It seems to parallel what one hears of the liquor-smuggling in America, for I was told that large numbers were being attracted by the great profits, and people of hitherto unimpeachable reputation were engaged in the trade; so that in this way, as well as by the use of the drug, numerous people were being debauched. . . . Caravans of the drug have been brought over by the soldiers from Yünnan and Kueichow, where the planting has been encouraged and even insisted upon by the officials, who in some cases have taxed it when planted, when in blossom, and when the drug is gathered. The blame rests entirely upon the south-west government, and it would seem that the leaders, such as Wu Ting-fang, Tang Shao-yi, Sun Yat-sen, C. T. Wang, and others, men of integrity, should stop this traffic or accept the responsibility for it.”¹

A similar report from South Fukien appeared in the *North China Herald* of November 20, 1920.

Here is another picture, supplied by a traveller who has recently made a journey of some three thousand miles through the more remote regions of the Central and North-Western provinces and Sin Kiang. It conveys some idea of the kind of felicity which has been conferred on the common people by the new dispensation.

“ The country all over is stamped with the seal of war and rapine, of the ravages and wholesale destruction and massacres caused by the several Mahomedan risings; ruins of whose villages, temples, farms, and country houses, are met all the way along.

“ Even places such as Sian and Lanchow have lost, during this strenuous century of national evolution, the lustre of their prestige and glory of yore; rebellion,

¹ I have dealt with some facts of the opium trade elsewhere—*vide* page 290. In this connection it is interesting to find an authority like Sir Charles Addis publicly announcing, as late as the 19th January, 1921, that “under the Republic the Opium Trade has been suppressed, the degrading practice of footbinding abandoned, examination by torture abolished, early marriages discountenanced, a free Press created,” etc., etc.

revolutions, floods, and other calamities having delivered the *coup de grâce*. Minor towns are empty and pretty dead; evidence of their once having enjoyed greater prosperity is visible, but that is about all there is left! Villages are a collection of squalid hovels."

The editor of the *North China Herald*, always a sympathetic recorder of events and a sincere friend of the Chinese people, summed up the situation last July, in the following words:—

"Those who have found it a weariness to follow the accounts of China's civil war in our pages from day to day, and have found them merely an interminable record of bickering and chicanery, have our sympathy; but they have nevertheless missed an interesting page of history in the making, and an instructive comment on the failure of Democracy in this young Republic. The present deplorable situation originated in the ineptitude of Parliament and in the failure of the people's representatives to think imperially, or indeed to think of anything but their personal profit and selfish aggrandisement. China is a vast country and ought to be represented by big men; unfortunately, though she has three Parliaments, one in Peking, one in Canton, and a third which proposes to transfer its activities to Chungking, there is not to be found in any of them a man who rises above the level of mediocrity, and it is to be feared there are many who fall beneath even this low standard. . . . The present situation is that there is fighting between the Chihli and Anhui forces, with the President making futile efforts to bring about peace, while Chang Tso-lin threatens to march his whole Manchurian army—100,000 men on paper—to crush whoever refuses to hearken to his offers or commands. The nation looks on with interest. It is a contest between the militarists, and, whoever succeeds, the ideal of government by the people for the people will not be advanced a hairbreadth. 'When the city gate is on fire the fishes in the moat perish,' and while armies struggle, agriculture and industry are being ruined. Whoever triumphs, the result of the present upheaval will doubtless be to keep the yoke of militarism as firmly as ever on the neck of the people of China. As Europe has learned to its sorrow, it is possible to win the

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war and lose the peace, so China is beginning to understand that that blessed word democracy does not mean peace, and that prosperity and order are not necessary corollaries of a successful revolution and a republican form of government. The fact is, the form of government is of much less importance than the character of the men who administer it."

Since these words were written, the world (or that small part of it which is interested in the destinies of China) has been confronted by the terrible spectacle of millions of inoffensive, thrifty peasants dying of starvation in the famine region, quite close to the centres of Government, while all the time the politicians, callously indifferent to their pitiful plight, continue to wrangle over the whited supulchre of a meaningless Constitution, and the Tuchuns make war, one upon another, for the right to plunder the survivors.

This brief review of actualities, based on the evidence of disinterested and sympathetic observers, brings us back to first principles, and to emphatic repudiation of the idea that law and order, peace and prosperity, can be attained in China, either by the present generation or the next, through the assertion of democratic ideals or the creation of representative institutions. The idea springs from the perennial delusion, of those whose business or pleasure it is to apply their theories to facts of which they have not sufficient experience, that states of society can be swiftly re-modelled by legislative enactments and systems of culture, and that a nation can be fitted for self-government by the adoption of a code. In the case of the irresponsible mandarins who have so grievously mis-ruled China since the revolution, it is incontestably true that, in the words of Mill, "the name and forms of popular representation have had no effect but to prevent despotism from attaining the stability and security by which alone its evils can be mitigated or its few advantages realised." Can it be doubted that, if Yuan Shih-k'ai had been allowed to restore the system

of paternal despotism which the Chinese people (mandarins included) understand and respect, he would have delivered them out of the hands of many of their present oppressors, and given peace in his time, even as Diaz gave peace to Mexico?

Amongst the Intellectual idealists in the United States who have lately studied the Chinese problem, the name of Professor Dewey carries great weight, and rightly so, for his outlook combines a philosophical and scholarly attitude with humanism of the benevolent type. He differs from the orthodox idealist in so far that he perceives the fundamental problem of China to be, not political, but economic and social. In a recently published article, speaking of the characteristic callousness of the Chinese, he justly observes :—

“Where there is a complete manifestation of the Malthusian theory of population, friendliness develops with great difficulty to the point of active effort to relieve suffering; where further increase in population means increase in severity of the struggle for subsistence, aggressive benevolence is not likely to assume large proportions. On the contrary, when the cutting off of thousands by plague, or flood, or famine means more air to breathe and more land to cultivate for those who remain, stoic apathy is not hard to attain.”

Professor Dewey might have added that the same observation holds true when the population is decimated by battle, murder, and sudden death; these, like all other calamities, are philosophically accepted by the survivors. But when he comes to discuss the remedy for this deplorable condition of affairs, the Professor still seeks and finds it in the panaceas of his own class and kindred, and advocates a remedy the immediate result of which, if applied, would only be to increase the density of China's population at the expense of the rest of the world. If it be true that China's procreative recklessness is the fundamental cause of the pitiful condition under which the masses struggle for existence, what can

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it profit them, or humanity, to stimulate this racial tendency by "an introduction of modern industrial methods which will profoundly affect their environment"? Is it not self-evident that if "mining, railways, and manufacturing, based upon China's wealth of unused resources, give a new outlet for energies that cannot now be used," the immediate result would be to enable the Chinese to compete with other nations in the world's food-markets, and, while thus increasing their own numbers, to aggravate the problem of existence in countries which cannot possibly compete with low-standard Oriental labour? China's problem is essentially and eternally a food problem, which until now the nation has solved, tragically enough, within its own borders. To encourage her to solve it henceforth by industrial competition with the white race, is very typical of the political idealism of a country which nevertheless protects itself rigorously against Asiatic immigration.

Idealism of this curiously illogical kind is by no means confined to those professors and philanthropists in the United States who have recently displayed interest in China; the same tendency to ignore the existence of all unpleasant facts which conflict with preconceived ideas, and to proclaim these ideas as facts, has been conspicuous in the attitude of several of the distinguished business men and politicians who have recently visited China. Very typical and instructive, for example, are the words in which Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, head of the American group of the Consortium, has borne testimony to the political activities and influence of American missionaries by virtue of which China is to cease to be merely a people and become a nation.¹ Very significant also were the attitude and utterances of the large party of Congressmen, accompanied by their wives, sisters, and daughters, who visited China last autumn. The party, which included Mr. John Burke, Treasurer of the United States, and Dr. Paul Reinsch, ex-Minister to China, was enter-

¹ *Vide infra*, p. 127.



B. T. Pridaux]

WISDOM IN THE ROUGH.



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VERY BUSY.

tained on its way through Shanghai at a banquet given by the Pan-Pacific Association, at which Mr. Tang Shao-yi (President of the Association) welcomed the distinguished guests, and Dr. Sun Yat-sen held forth for over an hour in eloquent eulogy of his own political activities, and applauded his persistence in continuing the struggle between the South and the North, "in order to save China from Japanese militarists." Dr. Reinsch spoke for the visitors. The keynote of his speech was contained in his fervent declaration that "out of all the world, Dr. Sun stood out as the representative of the Chinese ideal, true to her inner traditions and the ideals Americans believed in. First of all, he was a true and great Chinese Liberal." Furthermore, he said that it was the duty of the civilised world "to sustain China in her struggle for higher organisation of national life. There could not be tolerated any intrigue, military or diplomatic, against the integrity and sovereignty of China. Asia, Africa, and Europe must look upon China as the mother of civilisation."

It would be difficult, I think, to quote a more striking example of the hypnotic influence of catchwords and preconceived ideas, and of the force of delusions in which the wish is ever father to the thought. Dr. Reinsch, having had occasion to study the Chinese situation on the spot for several years, can scarcely plead ignorance of the facts of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's career, of his long and intimate connection with "Japanese militarists" and financiers; of his acceptance of highly-paid office under Yuan Shih-k'ai, against whom he subsequently conspired; of his incessant plots and intrigues against the Central Government, no matter how constituted; of his failure, during all these years, to originate one single measure of constructive reorganisation. Dr. Reinsch must be aware that, in the opinion of foreigners in China, Dr. Sun has for some years been regarded as a very mischievous agitator, and that even in the Chinese Press he figures more often as a laughing-stock than as a

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Liberal. His latest intrigues with the Anfu clique and Tuan Chi-jui (whom he formerly denounced as a traitor) have proved once more that his ideals are scarcely of the kind that most Americans believe in. But Dr. Reinsch and his friends prefer to shut their eyes to all these things. They remember only that Dr. Sun is, intellectually speaking, the offspring of American ideals, that he has proclaimed a Republic, professed Christianity, and preached the pure doctrine of American democracy. How, then, can he fail to be truly representative of the ideal Chinese statesman? Dr. Sun, Mr. Tang Shao-yi, Dr. Wu Ting-fang, and other "distinguished leaders of the Constitutionalist cause," have now gone back to Canton, there to re-organise their independent "Military Government" and to resume operations, through Kuangsi, against the Central Government. Is it exaggerating the influence of Dr. Reinsch and his Congressional party to suggest that, were it not for their sympathy and support, Dr. Sun and his friends might have hesitated before committing themselves, and condemning the country, to a further period of senseless civil war?

While on the subject of the Canton Parliament and "the leaders of the Constitutionalist cause," it should be observed that, apart from the advantages of world-wide notoriety to be derived from the direction of civil war, the business of Constitution-making, as practised by the "true and great Liberals" of the Canton faction, is not without its solid advantages. According to a Chinese student, who investigated the record of the Canton legislators on the spot, and published the results in the *North China Herald* (June 5, 1920), the members of the "Old" Parliament at Canton (as distinct from the "New" Parliament at Peking) received in salaries and subsidies sums amounting to \$4,240,000 in less than two years. Of this total, half a million dollars represented "special contributions for the purpose of completing the Constitution for the Republic of China." The investigator commented acidly on the fact that, despite this

lavish expenditure, the Constitution has not been completed, that it remains, in fact, "where it was when Yuan Shih-k'ai decided that he could govern the country unassisted." He pointed out that, when driven by their Kuangsi rivals to seek refuge at Shanghai, these Parliamentarians "forthwith appointed a Commission to study ways and means for raising funds to support themselves." Finally, he asked, "what excuse has the Old Parliament for living?" and the answer which he gave to this question deserves the attention of those who continue to proclaim the disinterested patriotism of the Cantonese faction.

"What," he asks, "has the Old Parliament done? It has done this and this alone: it has served as a constitutional smoke-screen for militarists of one faction or another. It has befogged the minds of the Chinese and foreigners here. It has encouraged civil war for principles in which it has no faith. It has permitted generals to battle against each other for jobs and has levied payments for its consent. It has sat in Canton, while its heart was in Shanghai and Peking. It has perpetuated itself and forbidden the compromising of issues between North and South on any basis other than its own longevity. It has supported its paymaster and has forfeited the welfare of the land in accepting this support.

"But its crime consists not in its corruption, but in its effects upon the growing generation. Everybody knows and accepts the iniquity of Peking officialdom, but the country has regarded the Old Parliament as a body which stands between corruption and good government. And now that too is gone. Nobody can be trusted. There is no honour in China. The country is going to boot and nobody cares. So the people speak and so the Old Parliament's activities have encouraged them to speak."

(The "Old Parliament," be it noted, includes the most brilliant lights of Liberalism and Western learning in China's political firmament.)

But, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, there are

many sincere friends of China who, while recognising the moral failure of Young China's present leaders, pin their faith as firmly as ever to the younger generation of Western-educated students, much in the same spirit as every English officer pinned his faith to the men of his own regiment at the time of the Indian Mutiny. Because every human being is, and must always be, the combined product of his ancestry and environment, and for other reasons, which will be stated in their place, I find it as difficult to share this belief to-day as I did in 1911. And this scepticism is fortified just as much by doubts as to the relevance and moral value of the education which is being imparted to the present generation, as by study of the results of that education on its predecessors.

Let me cite two illustrations, both provided in the recent writings of "Western-learning" Intellectuals of the highest type. In the first, Mr. S. G. Cheng, an M.A. of Oxford, describes "Modern China" from the standpoint of his own class and creed. Like many of that class, Mr. Cheng combines great mental ability with sincere patriotism, but his book emphasises on almost every page the disabilities produced by Western education on the Oriental mind, which, do what you will, remains beneath the surface true to type, contemplatively philosophical and instinctively opposed to the practical scientific attitude of Western materialism. Mr. Cheng realises that continuance of the present deplorable condition of affairs in China is likely to end in national disaster, and he attributes this condition to the work of a few politicians "who are not supported at all by the popular wishes or voice. The Northern Militarists and Southern Constitutionals, who both claim to fight for the liberty of the people, alike ignore the feelings and sufferings of the silent mass. . . . The future of China depends upon the training of her inhabitants that will enable them to carry on their Government free from any exploitation of political adventurers." In other words, the nature of the people must be changed, so as to awaken

them to an intelligent capacity of self-government. This, he thinks, may be achieved "by education and increasing contact with the West," but, like most of those who share this opinion, he overlooks the important fact that it is chiefly from the "Western-learning" mandarin class that to-day's most active groups of political adventurers have emerged! If this has been the result of contact with the West at the top, what justification is there for hoping for better results from further disturbance of the tranquil mind of the masses?

Very significant are those passages in Mr. Cheng's book in which he discusses the political ascendancy of Japan at Peking. He sums up the situation frankly in these words: "In pursuance of Imperialistic and Jingoistic aims, the Government of Tokyo has bribed certain undesirable elements in the country, placed them in power and supported them with money to cover their administrative expenses." The blame for this state of affairs he ascribes, not to the undesirable elements, who are in reality the chief offenders, but to Japan. Herein he speaks with the same voice as his brilliant *confrères*, Mr. Wellington Koo and C. T. Wang, who represented China at the Versailles Conference. Like them, he proposes several remedial measures and reforms to relieve the situation thus created, such as a revision of the Tariff and the abolition of extra-territoriality; like them, also, he remains strangely silent concerning the vital need of integrity in the Public Service, and of measures to check the activities of the "undesirable elements" aforesaid. It will be time to share Young China's enthusiasm for political adventures when its Intellectuals have come to recognise and denounce official corruption as the chief cause of their country's parlous plight.

The second illustration to which I refer was contained in an apologia for the "returned student," written last summer by Dr. M. T. Z. Tyau.¹ This writer lays stress

¹ Now legal adviser to the Chinese delegation to the League of Nations at Geneva.

on the achievements of the class of students educated in America and England, by whose influence "the country has been changed from an absolute despotism to a popular democracy, from an antiquated conservatism to a modern liberalism." He goes on to deplore the fact that, the number of returned students having greatly increased, there are not enough Government jobs to go round, so that to-day, "through no fault of his own, he is at a discount, just as the Bank of China and Bank of Communications notes are depreciated. Of course, such a state of affairs is abnormal and can only be temporary, just as the Chinese Republic will soon really come into its own. But while the unsatisfactory situation lasts, the position of the returned student is far from enviable. In the keen struggle for existence, diplomas and degrees are often forgotten, and an incumbent (*sic*) for a certain position might as well have stayed at home, instead of returning with a foreign academic or professional training. Consequently, the spectacle is often one of undignified incongruities. This is as it should never be, and indubitably will be remedied, as soon as the Liberal elements come into power." A franker exposition of the economic basis of Chinese Liberalism would be difficult to discover; Dr. Tyau has put his finger, nevertheless, on the spot from whence arises most of the political unrest in China. When he proceeds to give a list of the returned students to whom is due "the modernisation of China's hoary civilisation," he is less convincing. The list begins with Ex-President Li Yuan-hung, includes our old friends, Wu Ting-fang, Admiral Sah, etc., and ends with Dr. Lew Yuklin, formerly Chinese Minister in London. The only conclusion which a dispassionate observer can draw from it is, that a foreign education does not necessarily unfit an intelligent Chinese for a mandarin's career.

To conclude. If, as I have said, the Chinese people are at present neither fitted for the exercise of self-government nor anxious for it, if the Republic is nothing but a name, and the framework of Parliamentary Govern-



B. T. Prideman;

CHINA : THE ETERNAL PROBLEM.

ment, a hollow mockery, what of the future? By what means can China possibly be saved from complete disintegration and her inoffensive and defenceless people from further calamities? This question will be dealt with in the chapter which deals with the Problem of Reconstruction. But it may be useful at the outset to summarise certain conclusions which bear upon it:—

1. The ills that flesh is heir to in China, the chronic destitution, diseases, and discontents endured by vast numbers of the population, are directly due to the social system and religious beliefs, which make procreative recklessness a duty; these are evils which cannot possibly be removed, or even remedied, by any change in the form of government or political institutions of the nation.

2. While the inevitable development of China's mines, railways, and other sources of latent wealth by modern industrial methods is likely to diminish the normal severity of economic pressure for a time, by enabling her to increase her food supply from abroad, the immediate result will be an increase of her population up to the new limits of the means of subsistence; and this increase can only be achieved at the cost of increased economic pressure in countries where labour enjoys a higher standard of living. Europe and America will then be compelled to protect themselves against the products of Chinese industrialism in the same way, and for the same reason, that they now protect themselves against Asiatic immigration.

3. So long as the present Chinese social system endures, the only means by which the ever-latent elements of disorder can be held in check is a strong Central Government, organised and *administered upon principles which the masses understand and to which they always have been accustomed*; that is to say, principles of paternal despotism, applied in accordance with the spirit and traditions of the race.

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4. Under existing conditions, therefore, a democratic form of government, as understood in Europe and America, is impossible in China. To encourage the small minority of foreign-educated Intellectuals who profess to wish to apply it, can only result in making unrest, civil war, and brigandage, widespread and endemic, instead of local and epidemic.

5. The rapidly increasing financial and administrative difficulties which now confront the Chinese Government, as the result of ten years of civil strife and official corruption, can only be overcome, and the nation's recuperative powers encouraged, by concerted action of the Powers, directed, in the first instance, to the disarmament and disbandment of the rabble armies, which prey upon every form of productive industry, and thereafter to the moral and material support of the Central Government, howsoever constituted. When no more money is forthcoming for the maintenance of these armed hordes (and that day is close at hand) a crisis will occur; and to escape from their wrath, the mandarins will probably endeavour, as usual, to divert unpleasant attention from themselves by the instigation of an anti-foreign movement. When this crisis has passed, a period of reconstruction, with foreign supervision over China's finances, must of necessity be imposed.

CHAPTER II

YUAN SHIH-K'AI (1912-1916)

It will be remembered that, after being recalled to high office by the panic-stricken Manchus in October 1911, Yuan Shih-k'ai did all in his power to prevent the overthrow of the dynasty and the introduction of a Republican form of government.¹ For four months he struggled manfully against hopeless odds; but weakened by internal intrigues, and abandoned by the foreign Powers, to which he had confidently looked for moral and financial support, he finally made a virtue of necessity and accepted the Presidency of the Republic in March 1912. It is significant of the condition of political affairs in China that, only three months before, he had publicly declared that "to be a party to the establishment of a Republic would brand him as a liar before all the world." But in accepting the Presidency, with quite obvious mental reservations, he merely followed the opportunist traditions of his class and creed. He realised that the metropolitan administration and the mandarinat of the provinces were quite as thoroughly disorganised and terrified as the Manchus themselves by the swift development of Young China's revolution, and that the only hope of preserving the country from complete chaos lay in the re-establishment of a strong central authority—no matter what its name—at Peking.

As it was at the time of the triumph of the Young Turks in 1908, so it was when Young China upset the Dragon Throne in 1911. Misled by the tumult and the shouting of students and professional agitators who proclaimed the birth of a new era to the cry of "liberty,

¹ Vide *Recent Events and Present Policies*, pp. 152, *et seq.*

equality, and fraternity," many observers at a distance, and some upon the spot, welcomed the establishment of the Republic as a proof of the Chinese people's political consciousness and fitness for representative government. In the infectious enthusiasm of the moment, the deep-rooted economic evils which are the permanent cause of social and political unrest in China, were overlooked; the clamour of self-seeking politicians was mistaken for an outburst of patriotic fervour, with the result that the permanence and constructive capacity of the new forces were greatly exaggerated.

In particular, many English and American missionaries were vocationally disposed to believe in Young China's intentions and ability to reclaim the people by virtue of Western learning and democratic institutions. In their zealous enthusiasm at the prospect of reaping the long-delayed harvest of their teachings, they were led to believe in the sudden awakening of the Chinese people's political morality. Therefore they overlooked not only the instinctive conservatism of the inarticulate masses, but the self-seeking ambitions which had produced this ferment—to say nothing of the corruption and administrative incapacity which, from the outset, characterised the revolutionary movement. They believed, in fact, in the miracle of a national re-birth. Thus it came about that the inauguration of the Republic was widely proclaimed in Europe and America as the dawn of a new era for China. For a year or more, diplomats, journalists, and missionaries vied with each other in forecasting the nation's brilliant future; everything that, after long centuries of education and effort, Europe had evolved in the direction of constitutional government, was to be introduced at once, and with complete success, in the new Utopia of the Far East. All the ancient foundations were to be uprooted with the Throne: Confucianism, the cult of ancestors, the patriarchal philosophy of the Sages, all were to be replaced, in the twinkling of an eye, by the latest thing in democratic institutions, with a Constitution broad-based on the nation's will,



B. T. Pridoux]

BREADWINNERS.

a government of the people by the people for the people, universal suffrage, conscription, and even votes for women.

Opinions of this kind, arising out of one of the most persistent delusions common to humanity, are more easily disseminated than dissolved. With regard to China's brief vision of Celestial Socialism, there are many observers who persist in believing in the mystic power of political formulæ to accomplish the impossible and to change the whole structural character of the race.¹ Yet the history of Young China's brief authority has been written with bloodshed and chaos throughout the land, in such a manner as to shatter beyond repair the people's faith in the healing virtue of the blessed word Republic. Within a year of Sun Yat-sen's declaration that the passing of the monarchy heralded "the dawn of peace and prosperity, just laws, and honest administration," the people's instinctive desire for authoritative rulership had already been clearly demonstrated. Even at that time Young China, absorbed in futile dissensions and sordid intrigues, had manifested the hopelessness of its bright vision of the millennium, while the struggle for supremacy between rival military chieftains was beginning to assume definite direction. Eight months after the revolution, the military and police authorities of the provinces had warned the members of the National Assembly "to cease from thwarting the Government by their senseless and selfish factions." The phenomena, which had been regarded by many as evidence of the fitness of the Chinese people for self-government under European institutions, had rapidly proved to be superficial and transient. The reaction of the *literati*, of the military and the merchant classes against Sun Yat-sen's political adventures, proved clearly, if proof were needed, that the real causes of unrest in China remain economic in their origin, and that, for

¹ Thus, quite recently an eminent financier has described the establishment of the Republic as "an experiment in self-government, unprecedented in scale and unique in its leap from autocracy to democracy without passing through the intervening stage of feudalism, as in Great Britain and Japan"!

these, the catchwords of Republicanism could provide neither remedy nor relief.

It is not only interesting, but profitable, to look back upon and study the masterly statecraft by means of which Yuan succeeded in bringing something like order out of chaos, restoring the authority of the Central Government in many of the provinces, and repairing the administrative and fiscal machinery, dislocated by the revolution. For it may safely be predicted that, whenever the Strong Man emerges who shall put an end to the present suicidal strife of factions, the methods by which he will attain to and maintain his authority will be based on the stratagems and devices of Yuan Shih-k'ai and of his illustrious predecessor, Li Hung-chang. At the end of his first year of office in the Presidency, the Radicals of the Kuo-Min tang party still held the balance of power and Yuan's attitude was one of watchful waiting. He knew full well that the activities of Young China, the hybrid radicalism of Sun Yat-sen and his fellow fanatics, must speedily wear themselves out in futility against the irresistible deadweight of national conservatism. He could afford to give them rope, to let them discuss their paper constitutions and democratic ideals at Peking, while his secret agents were busy in the provinces, organising at strategical points the forces with which, when the time came, he would be able to put an end to any armed assaults that might be organised by the political factions. At that date it was impossible, by the light of Yuan's record under the Manchu dynasty, to predict his line of action or to gauge the measure of his strength of purpose in a protracted crisis. It had already been made manifest, for all who had eyes to see and ears to hear, that the Republic was a political interregnum, destined sooner or later to be replaced either by the absolute Monarchy of the Man of Destiny, or by a limited Monarchy tempered by cautious experiments in Constitutionalism; but even those who appreciated Yuan's statesmanship could not assert with any

degree of confidence that he would display the qualities necessary to attain even partial command of a situation so complicated and so dangerous. It remained to be proved that he possessed the combination of diplomatic suppleness and ruthless despotism which is required for the making of a ruler in China. The velvet glove had been in evidence on more than one historic occasion—notably at the crisis of the Old Buddha's *coup d'état* in September 1898—but the iron hand had never been revealed in absolute authority.

Looking back to-day upon the chief events of Yuan's administration of the Presidency of the Republic, it is interesting to observe how each one marked a distinct and pre-arranged advance in a resolutely consistent policy, that policy which Yuan had frankly proclaimed from the outset as the country's only possible way of salvation. Western observers, even when familiar with the principles and practice of Chinese officialdom, found some difficulty in accounting for the boldness with which, at the first crisis of the revolution, Yuan resisted the abolition of the Monarchy and held his ground, almost alone, against the forces of Young China triumphant. They found it harder still to explain how it came to pass that, having thus declared himself, a man of Yuan's proved capacity in tactics of expediency should have been elected to the Presidency by the vote of Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary colleagues, and that these men should apparently have believed in his conversion to democratic principles of government. And as they gradually came to perceive in each of his carefully-timed dramatic *coups* the working out to its logical conclusion of his unswerving belief in despotic government, all clearly pointing to the inevitable restoration of autocracy, it became correspondingly difficult to account for the childlike confidence in him displayed by the leaders of the Kuo-Min tang. It is impossible to believe that the members of the Nanking Assembly were individually and collectively beguiled by Yuan's belated profession

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of faith in the Republic: their *naïveté* in this matter can only be explained on the assumption that the delegates were more concerned for the furthering of their private ambitions than for the application of Republican principles, and that they looked to Yuan to play the game of party politics, as they conceived it, and with due regard to the part which they had played in putting him at the head of affairs.

The issue proved that they misjudged their man and the solidity of the classical orthodoxy which he had proclaimed in defending the Monarchy. Yuan, as President, proved himself a past-master in all the arts of mandarin intrigue: expert in opportunism, prudent in counsel, of many devices; a very Ulysses for stratagem, unwavering in the execution of his plans. He adhered boldly to the corrupt traditions of venal expediency, which have characterised the Government of China for centuries, to the nepotism and tortuous methods of Oriental statecraft; but in all, and above all, he fought steadily for the maintenance of the unbroken continuity of time-honoured traditions, for the preservation of the philosophy and morality of the Confucian system, and for the maintenance of the ancient social structure of civilisation, founded upon that system, whose apex is the Dragon Throne. He acted from the outset upon the conviction, which he had frankly confessed to *The Times* correspondent at Peking on November 20, 1911, that "the institution of a Republic could only mean the instability of a rampant democracy, of dissension and partition," and that its results would be chaos, "amidst which all interests would suffer and for several decades there would be no peace in the Empire." He believed, with good cause, that the politicians of Young China were either vain dreamers or ambitious place-seekers, and that by no possibility could their dreams be brought into any direct relation with the actualities of the life, the deep-rooted reverences and beliefs, of the Chinese people. Upon this belief he acted consistently, even

while yielding lip-service to the Republican form of government and taking an empty oath of allegiance to the principle of representative institutions.

It is unnecessary to recapitulate here the incidents—many of them tragically sordid—of Yuan's successful campaign against the "rampant democracy" of Young China, or to trace in their order the stages by which he has slowly but surely restored the ancient edifice of autocracy, revered by the orthodox *litterati* and accepted by the Chinese people as the foundation of the immemorial order of things. Two incidents, however, which clearly indicated the President's policy and the methods by which it was to be fulfilled, deserve to be remembered. The first was the summary execution, by his orders, of two Republican generals, accused of treasonable conspiracy at Wuchang, in August 1912—an act of autocratic martial law administered *à l'Orientale*, without hesitation or formalities. The second was the assassination at Shanghai, in April 1913, of Sung Chiao-jen, the Kuo-Min tang's candidate for the Premiership, under circumstances which pointed clearly to the complicity, if not the direct instigation, of the President. The Republican generals at Wuchang were dangerous because they were capable of organising a military revolt; Sung Chiao-jen was dangerous because, at the moment when the National Assembly was about to meet for the first time, he was the uncompromising advocate of Parliamentary, as opposed to Presidential, authority. In both instances the dangers were swiftly and ruthlessly removed, by measures of despotic barbarity as cold-blooded as those of Tzū Hsi at the height of her power; and in both instances Yuan's knowledge of his countrymen was justified by the fact that the nation accepted the situation without indignation, almost with indifference. According to *The Times* correspondent, indeed, the general opinion in China in the autumn of 1912, instinctively recognising the need for some effective authority, blamed Yuan for being "far too

anxious not to transgress constitutional limits." He speedily rectified his shortcomings in that respect. If at any time after his inauguration as President he displayed a conciliatory attitude towards Young China, subsequent events proved that he was merely drawing back in order to jump the more effectively.

At the outset, Yuan's position was rendered dangerously insecure for lack of the sinews of war: until he had negotiated a large foreign loan, his authority lacked not only the prestige which recognition by the Powers conferred, but it lacked the means of purchasing the "loyalty" of military commanders like Chang Hsün and providing his agents at the provincial capitals with the only argument which is invariably convincing in China. Once placed in possession of funds, however, and assured of the sympathy and support of the Governments which direct the operations of the "Five Powers" group of financiers, Yuan could face with equanimity the Cantonese party's last desperate bid for place and power. "The war to punish Yuan" (July 1913) was a melancholy fiasco, and incidentally a valuable object-lesson in Chinese politics, because from beginning to end it was a matter of dollars and cents. The Army and Navy were frankly at the service of the highest bidder, and the only cash bidder was Yuan.

It was only after the President's easy victory over the rabble forces of Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing that his policy of centralisation revealed the hand of the Strong Man and his intention of restoring the principles and practice of autocratic government. He had bided his time—he had endured with philosophic calm the invasion of the high places of the metropolitan government by hordes of turbulent "Western-learning" students; he had given them rope, and they had hanged themselves. After the collapse of the last possible attempt at organised insurrection, the proscription of the Kuo-Min tang was inevitable. He removed it, as Cromwell removed the Rump Parliament, and no dog barked in all the

land. At his subsequent formal "election" to the Presidency on October 6, 1913, he took occasion to emphasise the fact that, for the future, he proposed to rule without interference, in accordance with ancient tradition. "Restrictions have been placed on my authority," he observed, "which have hampered me in my work of promoting the country's best interests," to which was added the significant reminder that "he had always preferred conservative to radical courses." He proceeded, therefore, to adopt them, removing, one by one, the flimsy props of the Cantonese jerry-built Republicanism with the deliberate precision of a chess-player; and all the while, as he destroyed the substance of representative government, he continued solemnly to pay his respects to the memory of its shadow.

There was nothing surprising in the fact that Yuan Shih-k'ai, having defeated the armed forces of his political opponents, should have put an end to the farce of Parliamentary government at Peking by decreeing the dissolution of the Kuo-Min tang. From the Chinese point of view, there was nothing remarkable in his action; nor was there anything contrary to Chinese traditions of statecraft in the "face-saving" expedients and explanations by which he justified every subsequent move in a perfectly-planned policy. The only really remarkable feature of the situation lay in the failure of many European observers to foresee its inevitable conclusion, and in their apparently sincere belief that constitutional methods of government were still within the range of practical politics at Peking. The dissolution of the Kuo-Min tang resulted naturally in the abolition of the National Assembly, and thereafter, equally logically, in the suppression of the local self-government Assemblies throughout the country. Parliament was replaced by a Political Council and an "Administrative Conference for the revision of the Constitution." The Administrative Conference, a body of seventy-one members, was composed almost exclusively of men selected by the

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President and by his agents, the Tutuhs, in the provinces, *literati* and officials of the old régime. Yuan Shih-k'ai's first Presidential address to this body left no room for further doubts as to his policy. "The Republic," he declared, "had been in existence for two years, and during this period, principles and laws have been dragged in the dust, while morality, self-control, and righteousness have been swept into oblivion"—in other words, his own wise forecast had been completely fulfilled. Thereafter, adopting the traditional phraseology of Imperial decrees, he proceeded to express his opinion of "the minority of turbulent demagogues," who had brought such evils upon the State, the "specious rogues" who talked glibly of liberty, equality, and patriotism, "intent all the while on possessing themselves of others' wealth, with which they flee overseas, seeking shelter under the ægis of the foreigner." Finally, after expressing his belief in gradual reforms and his intention to adopt a policy of practical reconstruction, he declared that, in his experience of the art of government, men and money were more useful than revolutionary theories.

As regards money, he was by no means well supplied; but the men were ready to his hand, and those whom he selected as Tutuhs, to direct and express "public opinion" in the provinces, served him, on the whole, faithfully and well. With the scrupulous regard for appearances, the careful whitening of sepulchres, which is the first principle of government in China, every step which Yuan subsequently took towards the practical reconstruction of the old orthodox autocracy and centralisation of power, was taken ostensibly in response to the unanimous petition of the Tutuhs. On their representations (thoughtfully drafted, to prevent possible mistakes, in the President's Secretariat) the Provincial Assemblies were abolished. With their approval, and that of the Political Council, the Worship of Heaven was revived, with ceremonies similar to those observed by the Manchu dynasty. At their instance, the Pro-



B. T. Pridoux

A CHINESE GARDEN (AT SOOCHOW).

visional Constitution was suspended till a more convenient season, and replaced by the Presidential system of government. The Cabinet became little more than a perfunctory body of well-paid secretaries, and the Premier's only duties were to appear at diplomatic functions and to countersign, *pro formâ*, the Presidential mandates. The Conference for the re-drafting of the Constitution, which met on March 18, 1914, afforded an indication of its quality by proposing to amend certain articles of the Code so as to confer on the President full power to declare war and make treaties without Parliamentary sanction. This was a typical example of collective "face-saving"—for all concerned were well aware that, in the absence of a successful revolution, there was no likelihood of any Parliament being convened. Had not the Provincial Assemblies been dissolved for "perversely usurping financial authority and obstructing the business of administration"? *Per contra*, at this juncture Yuan Shih-k'ai gave proof of the beginning of a policy of reconstruction, by instituting examinations to test the fitness of District Magistrates and other local authorities—a highly necessary reform, which might have led to practical results had Yuan been spared and had it been honestly carried out by competent examiners.

So long as Yuan Shih-k'ai's policy was confined to political and financial measures, clearly directed towards the re-establishment of the old order of metropolitan administration, public opinion accepted it placidly enough as a normal reaction against innovations that ran counter to the instincts and customs of the people. The Press, still largely controlled by Young China at the Treaty Ports, denounced it as unconstitutional, but the masses, knowing nothing of constitutions, were evidently unconcerned in the disputes of the scribes and politicians. They were only anxious that the bloodshed and brigandage, which they had come to associate with Republican ideas, should cease; wheresoever public opinion was articulate, it was evidently disposed to hope

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that Yuan, the Strong Man, would succeed in restoring law and order. The common people were weary of being looted in the name of liberty. It was only when the President, acting upon the "advice" of the Administrative Council, decided henceforward to perform the Winter Solstice sacrifice at the Temple of Heaven, that he became, in the sight of the people, something far more important than an administrator and a politician. By this momentous decision, Yuan Shih-k'ai carried his original profession of political faith to its logical conclusion—a conclusion which concerned the sons of Han in their daily lives, because it meant the restoration of the social structure, the re-assertion of things which the iconoclasts of Young China had threatened utterly to destroy. By this decision, as a *Times* correspondent in Peking justly observed, "the President practically proclaimed himself an autocratic ruler, who is responsible not to the nation, but to the Almighty alone." Yet even in so doing, Yuan was careful to have it suggested by his faithful Councillors that the Worship of Heaven was originally "Republican in spirit." And all the while, "in the profound seclusion of the Palace," he kept a firm grasp on the situation, gauging the force of public opinion from every quarter, timing every move in the game with the precision of a master-player, steadily increasing his hold over the provinces and their revenue-producing capacity. He knew—none better—that the loyalty of the majority of his supporters, and particularly of the army, was *au fond* a loyalty of loaves and fishes. He realised that his power to rule the Empire must ever depend on control of ready money sufficient to secure the removal or conversion of malcontents and to provide for the repression by force of widespread elements of disorder. As for the masses of the people, he declared his firm belief that they, like himself, were "no lovers of changes which run counter to immemorial custom"; for the rest, he knew that they cared not at all what the form or fashion of the Government may be, so long

as it secured for them surcease of civil strife and reasonable security for life and property.

The Presidential mandates issued by Yuan Shih-k'ai at this period afforded striking proof of his profound knowledge of his countrymen and of his conviction that they would welcome the restoration of the autocratic form of government to which they were accustomed. These mandates afford also instructive example of the curious admixture of patriarchal philosophy and childish *naïveté* which characterises the Chinese mind (whether Young or Old) whenever it attempts to graft new wood of European origin upon the venerable tree of native statecraft. The avowed purpose of the most important of these mandates was "to lay the permanent foundations of the new constitution in China"; its immediate and practical result was to remove the last vestiges of constitutional procedure. "The most renowned scholars of East and West," it declared, "are agreed that, in framing a fundamental law, it is essential to bear in mind the condition of the people. No good can possibly come of cutting one's feet to fit a pair of shoes." So the shoes were made to fit the understandings of the day, good comfortable shoes, fashioned on the old dynastic last. The Presidential election law, promulgated in December 1914, conferred ten years of office on the President, who was to be eligible for re-election by a vote of two-thirds of the Administrative Council. To "prevent intrigue and strife," the President was empowered to nominate three persons, whose names were to be recorded and secreted upon a table of gold, one of whom was to succeed him in the event of his death.

Another mandate, issued in response to a memorial by the Censors, decreed that henceforth "no member of any political party shall be eligible for membership of Parliament." The Censors based their memorial on the lamentable fact that "China's recently dissolved Parliament became a laughing-stock, because all its members belonged to political parties. Among them

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were to be found men who degraded the profession of letters, men who indulged in windy rhetoric, who employed money, and even arms, to turn the country upside down. The parties used their collective strength to influence elections and usurp power." By the re-drafting of the Constitution, full powers were conferred upon the President to declare war and make treaties. In his hands, also, was placed supreme authority over the finances and armed forces of the country. Finally, a leaf was carefully selected from Great Britain's wait-and-see procedure of Parliamentary reform by the promise of a model Parliament, to consist of an Upper and a Lower House, to be elected and convened at some convenient season in the dim future.

Thus, out of the chaos left by the passing of the Manchus and the turmoil of the revolution, Yuan Shih-k'ai's genius of statesmanship, conforming strictly to the ancient classical model, succeeded in effectively restoring the authority of the metropolitan administration, with himself as its head, in the undisguised capacity of Dictator. Every stage in his intricate programme was silently and skilfully carried out with the polished smoothness of a conjuring performance, and the general effect on the audience was such as to completely justify those who hold that the Chinese people are in no sense fitted, or even anxious, for self-government. In other words, only under a benevolent form of despotism, conforming to the Confucian traditions of government, can law and order be maintained. By his very aloofness and dignified reticence, by his acute perception of the "happy mean" and pursuance of the lines of least resistance, by his masterly handling of semi-independent military chiefs and provincial officials, Yuan succeeded in establishing himself in the eyes of the people as the Man of Destiny, the only ruler in sight who could possibly hold in check the ever-present elements of disorder.

The divine right of monarchs in China being intimately bound up with the sacred institution of ancestor-

worship, it is a matter of tradition that no new dynasty can rightfully claim the "mandate of Heaven" unless it has overthrown its predecessor by force of arms. It is safe to say that when Yuan struggled to retain the Manchu hierarchy in its place, as a figure-head shorn of despotic authority, he did so because he realised that the eventual restoration of the Throne was inevitable, and that grave dangers must confront the creation of a new Imperial House. Those dangers were undoubtedly lessened by the insidiously-gradual assertion of Yuan's autocratic authority, and by the fact that the people (including the Manchu clans) were thus led to regard him as the head of the State. Some of his methods were extremely "slim," and certain of his swift reprisals were barbarous, according to Western ideas, but all conformed to time-honoured precedents of Chinese rule, and therefore none aroused anything like popular indignation.

Yuan Shih-k'ai's subsequent attempt to restore the monarchical system of government in his own person merely carried his openly-avowed principles to their most natural conclusion. Neither by his actions nor by his utterances had he ever definitely abandoned those principles or modified his profound distrust of "changes which run counter to immemorial custom." Had the question of the monarchy been solved along the lines of classical tradition, as a matter of internal politics, it can hardly be doubted that Yuan, as Emperor, would have succeeded in establishing his effective authority to the general satisfaction and benefit of the Chinese people. Apart from the opposition of the Kuo-Min tang faction led by Sun Yat-sen—nationally speaking, not so important a factor in the situation as some foreign observers were led to believe—everything pointed to the probability that the nation, if left to itself, would have welcomed the restoration of the Monarchy, if only because the masses had come to associate the Republican doctrine with bloodshed and brigandage. The ruling class, the

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mandarin hierarchy, were clearly in sympathy with the restoration of the monarchical form of government.

But the question was not destined to be settled as a matter of internal politics. The plans of Yuan Shih-k'ai and his supporters failed to realise the dangers of foreign intervention, and particularly the interest evoked in Japan by any important change in China's affairs. The President's methods and mandates during the year preceding his acceptance of the Throne afforded striking proof of his profound knowledge of his countrymen, but they revealed also his inability to appreciate the international situation.

The movement for the restoration of the Monarchy, organised by the Chou-An-hui Society, began to assume a definite form a year after the outbreak of war in Europe, in August 1915. It failed conspicuously to take into account the significance of the demands which Japan had addressed to China, in settlement of her outstanding claims, after the expulsion of the Germans from Kiao-Chao. These demands, submitted to the Chinese Government in the form of a Protocol by Mr. Hioki on January 18, 1915, were unmistakably of a nature to emphasise the special rights and material interests claimed by Japan as the result of her victories. As *The Times* observed, "it was obvious to everybody, except, perhaps, to the Chinese statesmen, that Japan would probably make use of her opportunity to obtain some definite settlement of her many outstanding claims against her neighbour." We need not here recapitulate these claims or describe the subsequent negotiations which took place at Peking between January and May. It was recognised in England that certain of the "contingent" and questionable demands put forward (which were not communicated to the Allied Powers) were inspired by the exigencies of the internal political situation in Japan. The Okuma Government had been defeated in the Chamber and a General Election was impending, in which the Government had perforce to reckon with a strong popular demand

for a more active "forward" policy in China. After four months of tedious negotiations at Peking (in which German intrigue played an important rôle by means of a systematic propaganda of falsehood in the Chinese Press) the Japanese Government presented an ultimatum to China (May 6) in which the "contingent" demands above mentioned were withdrawn and reserved for future discussion. Count Okuma's party had won the elections in March, but popular feeling was still strongly expressed on the subject of China, and the Government was being charged with vacillation and urged to employ military force to back its demands. On April 2, Count Okuma had taken occasion, through Reuter's correspondent, to declare that Japan's position and policy in her negotiations with China had been deliberately misrepresented, especially in America, as the result of false statements spread broadcast by German agents.

The attitude of Yuan Shih-k'ai throughout these negotiations was friendly but evasive; in refusing the greater part of the Japanese claims, he took his stand on the ground that it was not possible for the Chinese Government to concede any demands calculated to impair China's sovereignty or the Treaty rights of other Powers, an attitude which barred discussion of many of the questions which Japan had raised. He had also stipulated from the outset that Kiao-Chao should be completely restored to China and that China should be represented in the general peace negotiations after the war. In declining the finally modified demands of the Japanese Government on May 3, the Chinese Foreign Office expressed itself in a distinctly unconciliatory manner, revealing most inopportunately the traditional mandarin arrogance and contempt for Japan's claims to be treated as a great Power. In this attitude it was encouraged, no doubt, by Count Okuma's public declaration of pacific and reasonable intentions. When subsequently confronted with a forty-eight-hour ultimatum, however, Yuan Shih-k'ai and his advisers made the

usual virtue of necessity and promptly yielded. By the terms of the settlement thus effected, Japan regularised and consolidated her position in Shantung (in succession to the Germans), in South Manchuria, Eastern Inner Mongolia, and on the coast of Fukhien province.

Yuan Shih-k'ai's diplomacy had brought him thus far fairly successfully through a difficult situation; but his usual astuteness was lacking when he failed to draw from these negotiations the obvious conclusion that, in the matter of his personal ambitions to found a new dynasty, he would have to reckon seriously with the Japanese Government. He had never been *persona grata* in Japan since the days when, as Li Hung Chang's lieutenant and Resident in Korea, he had opposed Japanese policy and supported that of Russia; he might well have foreseen that the Government at Tokyo would discourage any attempt on his part to establish himself upon the Throne of China. He was certainly not without warning on this score. One of the ablest and most influential writers in China, the famous scholar Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, who had served as Minister of Justice in Yuan's first Cabinet during the crisis of 1911, and had then strongly supported the maintenance of the Monarchy together with a constitutional form of government, retired from the State Council in August 1915, and openly denounced the monarchical movement on broad principles of national policy. In September he published his opinions on the subject in a series of articles in the *Peking Gazette*. His objections to Yuan's accession to the Throne were based partly on grounds of classical orthodoxy and partly on recognition of the certainty of Japan's intervention. Regarding the matter from the point of view of historical precedents, ever dear to the mind of the *literati*, he observed that public opinion would undoubtedly support the President's accession to the Throne "if he had first defeated a foreign foe in a decisive battle." There being no immediate prospect of this solution, he laid stress on the fact that "full recognition of the Monarchy was

not likely to be accorded to China by certain Powers until after the Peace Conference of Europe has concluded its business." Referring specifically to Japan, he observed that "the country which has the loudest voice in our affairs is that which lies close to our elbow," and predicted that "if this country has occasion to consider the question of recognition, it will also have occasion to interfere. Even a little child," he concluded, "can foresee that Japan will not recognise the new Government without demanding the concession of further privileges, which China dare not refuse." Yuan Shih-k'ai was undoubtedly impressed by the views of this famous writer. He recognised their far-reaching influence, and made every effort to enlist Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's support and to persuade him to speak smooth things; but in vain.

In October the State Council made a show of constitutional procedure by referring the question of the Monarchy to a vote of the provinces, or rather to a number of individuals selected by the President and his supporters to represent them. In due course, on October 30, the expected happened. The Japanese Minister at Peking, accompanied by his British and Russian colleagues, called at the Chinese Foreign Office and offered friendly advice on behalf of his Government against the restoration of the monarchical system. He pointed out that while Europe was at war it would be dangerous for China to make changes likely to create internal dissensions; for this reason his Government respectfully advised the President temporarily to postpone the projected change. The Foreign Minister replied that the Chinese Government had no reason to anticipate serious opposition in the provinces, and that, having referred the question to the decision of the people, they must abide by the issue, whatever it might be. The issue, of which there never was any doubt, was a practically unanimous "vote" in favour of Yuan's accession (November 5). Yuan Shih-k'ai's attitude at

this juncture plainly intimated his conviction that the danger of foreign intervention in China's domestic affairs would not be increased or diminished by any change in the form of the Government. He believed, indeed, that the pre-occupation of the European Powers in the war had greatly lessened the chance of such intervention, and he evidently under-estimated the risk of serious opposition being organised against him in China. As regards Japan, he appears to have thought that active intervention from that quarter would strengthen his hands and gain for him the support of patriotic opinion, even among the Young China revolutionaries. In deference to further representations from the Japanese Minister and his colleagues, he directed the Minister for Foreign Affairs to state that the Government was in a position to deal with opposition in China, but that it must depend on the good offices of foreign Governments to control revolutionaries domiciled outside its jurisdiction—an unmistakable reference to the support given in Japan to Sun Yat-sen, Huang Hsing, and other political agitators. Here, again, Yuan's courage was greater than his wisdom; for his experience during the revolution of 1911 and on many other occasions should have reminded him that revolutions in China are rather a matter of money than of political ideals, and that a handful of energetic men, provided with sufficient dollars, could get the rabble army of any province to move in any and every direction. On November 9 the Chinese Government, while adhering to its intentions, announced that no change in the system of government would take place before the New Year.

On December 6 came the first mutterings of the storm which eventually put an end to Yuan Shih-k'ai and all his ambitions. A Government cruiser lying off the Arsenal at Shanghai was seized by a party of thirty revolutionaries, chiefly naval students; but the affair was purely local, and the subsequent proceedings on both sides savoured of *opéra bouffe*. Thereupon the State

Council memorialised the President to put an end to the prevalent uncertainty and unrest by proclaiming himself Emperor without further delay. After the customary face-saving protestations of unworthiness, Yuan Shih-k'ai complied, and on December 12 the Monarchy was proclaimed. The coronation ceremony was fixed for February 9. But it was not to be.

Within a week after the issue of the mandate announcing Yuan's accession came rumours of a serious insurrection brewing in the far-western province of Yünnan, organised and led by Tsai Ao, a military official educated in Japan, whom Yuan had appointed to the military governorship of the province after the revolution. On December 27 the revolutionary leaders and gentry of Yünnan declared the independence of their province, in opposition to the Monarchy, and Tsai Ao dispatched a rabble army, estimated at 30,000 men, against the Imperial forces which had been hurriedly sent to Szechuan. Despite initial successes gained by the Government, the insurrectionary movement spread rapidly; it was bound to do so, in view of the fact that in nearly every province there were bodies of unpaid and undisciplined troops, under generals of doubtful loyalty, eager for opportunities of looting. By the end of January the provinces of Kueichou and Kwangsi had renounced their allegiance. Yuan's star was now visibly declining, and his supporters, following the cautious custom of their class, were deserting him. When his right-hand man, Feng Kuo-chang, the Commander-in-Chief at Nanking, declined to support him, and bodies of the Imperial troops began to make common cause with the rebels, his friends at the capital persuaded him to issue an official announcement (January 22) that the establishment of the Monarchy would be indefinitely postponed. But the step came too late. In China nothing fails like failure, and Yuan, as aspirant Emperor, could never hope to command from the *literati* the same kind of blind loyalty which the best type of classical Confucianists displayed for the

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Manchu dynasty, even in its decline. By the end of March the tide of ill-fortune was running so strongly against him that his few remaining friends urged him to abdicate the Presidency and retire into private life. A month later the provinces of Kuangtung and Kiangsi had joined the hue and cry; Yuan was denounced as a traitor and usurper by the representatives of the same provinces which had urged him to ascend the Throne six months before. The remnants of his army were isolated and helpless in far-off Szechuan, the provincial Treasuries had suspended all remittances to Peking, and his act of renunciation had merely served to intensify the vindictive feelings and personal ambitions of his adversaries. His position was clearly impossible; even amidst his own protégés of the Court faction there were few to do reverence to the Strong Man who had failed. On April 22, hoping still to retrieve something of the desperate situation, Yuan agreed to surrender all civil authority to the Cabinet, reconstructed under the Premiership of Tuan Chi-jui, who came to the front at this juncture. Tuan had been Yuan's Minister of War in 1913, when he had displayed much energy and ability in defeating the abortive "campaign to punish Yuan," launched by Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary friends. Despite his conservative and monarchical tendencies, he was popular with the leaders of the southern faction; an able diplomatist, and credited by his friends with unusual nimbleness of opinion in politics. Upon his accession to the Premiership, his Cabinet proceeded to placate the southern party by announcing its intention of re-establishing Parliamentary Government at an early date. Meanwhile the southern Kuo-Min tang leaders had proclaimed Li Yuan-hung, the Vice-President of the Republic, as President, and had constituted themselves into a new Provisional Government at Canton, without reference to Peking. What would have been the ultimate fate of Yuan Shih-k'ai under these conditions, none can say; he solved all such problems by dying on June 5. The

medical men who attended him ascribed his death to kidney trouble and nervous prostration; the man in the street at Peking said, with equal truth, that he died of "eating bitterness" and loss of face. Officialdom at Peking appeased its conscience, and possibly placated the soul of the departed, by a State funeral on a most imposing scale.

Yuan Shih-k'ai having passed to his rest, Li Yuan-hung became President of the Chinese Republic, with Tuan Chi-jui as Premier. The country, or rather the vernacular Press, expressed great relief at the change and confidence in the early establishment of law and order under the beneficent direction of a constitutional Government. But if ever, when in disgrace with fortune, Yuan may have had misgivings as to the wisdom and patriotism of his own policy, his august shade had not long to wait by the Yellow Springs of Hades to see them amply justified, and his words fulfilled concerning the need for benevolent despotism and the evils of government under a "rampant democracy." The late Dictator had not been dead a month before it became apparent at Peking that only a strong hand of absolute authority could hope to impose a stable government upon the conflicting policies and ambitions of the semi-independent military chieftains and amateur politicians who now aspired to rule the country. Many experienced observers had foreseen that the substitution of the Dictator's rule for that of a number of jealous provincial governors would mean chaos, and they were right.

With Yuan passed the last of the super-mandarins of the old régime and the last hope of an early restoration of stable government in China.

CHAPTER III

CHINA JOINS IN THE WORLD WAR

THE passing of Yuan left the Central Government's finances in a parlous state and the administration completely disorganised. A month before his death the Government banks at Peking had suspended specie payments and the military leaders were fiercely clamouring for money. Tuan Chi-jui and the new Cabinet formed at the end of June, containing representatives of all parties, hoped to restore the fiscal machinery by convening the Parliament of 1913 for August 1 and by other measures calculated to conciliate the Kuo-Min tang leaders. The Cantonese section, however, showed no signs of willingness to co-operate with the new Government. On July 8 Admiral Li Ting-hsin published a manifesto at Shanghai, in which he declared that the Navy was determined to prevent the domination of the country by the militarists and monarchists who still controlled the administration; behind the Navy was Tang Shao-yi, who had been a staunch monarchist under the Manchus and one of Yuan Shih-k'ai's ablest lieutenants in the Chihli Viceroyalty, but now a leader of Kuangtung irreconcilables. Tang Shao-yi and his friends demanded the immediate revival of the Provisional Constitution drawn up by the Republican leaders at Nanking in 1911. Tuan Chi-jui endeavoured to win over this very able but fractious official by making him Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new Cabinet, but Tang declined the honour. The proceedings at the reopening of Parliament on August 1 showed clearly that the opposition of the Kuo-Min tang to Peking had not ended with the Monarchy, but that it would continue

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to be actively organised against the so-called Military Party and its leader, the Premier, Tuan Chi-jui. The Military Governors, on their side, who actually dominated the situation, were willing to give the Parliamentarians an opportunity of justifying their political existence, but they were frankly sceptical as to the utility of an institution which in the past had confined its constructive statesmanship to voting £600 a year to each of its members. From the outset it was clear that the life of the resuscitated Parliament would depend upon the good pleasure of the Military Governors and upon funds being made available for the generous maintenance of their armies.

For the remainder of the year the financial problem continued to be serious, though somewhat relieved by the increasingly satisfactory results of the Salt Gabelle under Sir Richard Dane. In the spring of 1917 the question of China's entering the war on the side of the Allies came to be seriously considered by the Chinese Cabinet. Tuan Chi-jui had for some time past been in favour of this course, because he realised that it would not only improve China's political position, and entitle her to a voice in the ultimate settlement of Far Eastern affairs, but that it would greatly alleviate the country's financial situation. When, therefore, at the beginning of February, the U.S. Minister at Peking invited the Chinese Government to follow the example of the United States by formally protesting against the illegality and barbarism of Germany's submarine campaign, and by severing diplomatic relations, the seed fell upon ground well prepared. On February 9 the Chinese Government replied to the German Note announcing the unlimited submarine campaign, by an energetic protest, and an intimation that if the protest were disregarded diplomatic relations would be broken off. But Tuan Chi-jui and his friends were not to have their undisputed way in this matter. As usual, the question became rapidly involved in a network of internal politics, in which German intrigue played no inconsiderable part and German money secured the

support of a considerable faction. The result, as usual, was a Ministerial crisis, in which the President's and the Premier's views came into sharp conflict. Tuan Chi-jui's supporters, all for immediate and energetic action, were opposed by the President on the ground that the matter was one for the decision of Parliament; their action was fiercely attacked and their motives impugned by the German-subsidised Press. At the outset their position was somewhat weakened by the delay which took place in the severance of relations between the United States and Germany, and by the failure of the Allies to convey any collective intimation to China that her intervention in the war would be welcome. This deficiency was remedied, however, on February 28, when the Allied Ministers at Peking presented a memorandum to the Chinese Government expressing sympathy with its action in regard to Germany and promising, in the event of diplomatic relations being severed, to consider favourably the suspension of the Boxer indemnity payments and a revision of the Chinese Customs tariff. Germany, on her side, was spending money freely at several military headquarters, and had offered to wipe out several outstanding financial claims against China, in the hope of avoiding a rupture. Tuan's Cabinet, after referring the matter to the political leaders at Peking and in the provinces, decided on March 2 to sever relations with Germany and to instruct the provincial authorities accordingly. President Li Yuan-hung, however, declined to sign these instructions, whereupon Tuan Chi-jui resigned. But the majority of Parliament and nearly all the leading politicians were against the President; Tuan could also count upon the energetic support of the Military Governors. After twenty-four hours' reflection the President gave way, whereupon Tuan withdrew his resignation and proceeded to lay the facts of the situation before a meeting of representatives of both Houses of Parliament. On March 11 Parliament voted for the severance of relations with Germany. They were severed on the 14th, and on

the same date the German ships at Shanghai and Amoy were seized by the Chinese authorities.

So far so good. But neither China nor the Allies could hope to derive advantages from the steps thus taken commensurate with their importance unless and until they were carried to their logical conclusion by a declaration of war against the Central Powers. There was never any serious difference of opinion among the various political and military factions at Peking as to the advisability of China throwing in her lot with the Powers fighting against the menace of Prussian militarism. Differences of interests there undoubtedly were, and factional jealousies which became actually intensified by the prospect of a Central Government at Peking relieved of its most pressing financial burdens; but never any vital differences of principles or national policy. Despite the feverish activity of German propaganda, educated opinion throughout China had slowly but surely come to appreciate the objects and methods of German *kultur* and to regard them with repugnance. The Chinese people are accustomed, as the result of the many invasions and rebellions that have ravaged their country, to the savageries of bandit warfare, to the looting of cities and the slaughter of unoffending citizens, but their history contains no record of cold-blooded barbarism to equal Germany's deliberate policy of ruthless warfare waged against civilians. Even more than by the sinking of neutral merchant ships, the *literati* were impressed by the Germans' violations of international law in Belgium, by their wholesale deportation of defenceless Belgians into captivity and forced labour; and all their humane and religious instincts were particularly outraged by the horrible callousness displayed by the Germans in their treatment of their dead.

The Chinese Cabinet's war policy was, therefore, approved in principle by Parliament, and generally endorsed throughout the country, at the end of March. A conference of military leaders held at Peking on April 26

voted for an immediate declaration of war; six days later the Cabinet passed a unanimous resolution to the same effect. On May 10 the matter was brought up for debate in the Lower House of Parliament. The result showed clearly that, while there was no genuine opposition to the war, the Parliamentarians, with the President behind them, were determined to treat the question as an opportunity for an attack upon Tuan Chi-jui and the military party. How far German threats and bribes were factors in this determination, remains necessarily a matter for conjecture, but both undoubtedly carried a certain amount of weight with the Opposition. On May 19 a resolution was adopted by Parliament declaring that, while not opposed to the entry of China into the war, the House would refuse to consider the question until the Cabinet had been reconstructed. In other words, the situation was to be determined, not by the merits of the national policy proposed, but by gratifying the envy and jealousy of politicians. All parties recognised quite clearly the moral and material advantages which the Chinese Government might expect to gain by declaring war on the Central Powers (the abolition of indemnity and loan interest payments to Germany alone represented a sum of £6000 a day), but the Opposition, headed by the Kuo-Min tang, was not disposed to see those advantages secured by Tuan Chi-jui and the Military Governors without a struggle.

The struggle accordingly took place. It involved in its three months' course the dismissal of Parliament by order of the Military Governors, the resignation of the President, and, finally, an abortive restoration of the Manchu dynasty and a comic-opera battle between Republican-Monarchists and the Monarchist-Republicans around and about the Forbidden City. Following immediately upon Parliament's demand for a reconstruction of the Cabinet, the President decided upon a new trial of strength with his masterful Premier. He proceeded to reconstruct the Cabinet by obtaining the resignation or



A BUDDHIST PRIEST (PROVINCE OF CHEKIANG).

by the dismissal of all its members except Tuan himself. But the Cabinet, thus reduced to one, adhered firmly to its position, and declined to renounce its policy; it urged the President to dissolve Parliament, plainly hinting that the Military Governors, determined to secure the declaration of war, had no intention of leaving Peking until he had done so. On May 23 President Li (apparently supported by a section of the Military Party) took his courage in both hands and dismissed the Premier. Tuan announced his intention to defy the mandate, and proceeded to confer with his friends at Tientsin. A week later the Military Governors of several provinces north of the Yangtze declared their independence of the Central Government. The attitude of Vice-President Feng Kuo-Chang at this juncture was, as usual, one of benevolent neutrality, and the solution of the crisis seemed therefore to rest with General Chang Hsün, the genial swashbuckler of Shantung, who had made a name for himself as a military Vicar of Bray under the Manchus and during the revolution. In the south, Sun Yat-sen, Tang Shao-yi, and other Kuo-Min tang leaders were loudly denouncing Tuan and his supporters as exponents of militarism, and calling on all patriots to rally to the defence of Parliament and the people's liberties. Their voice was the voice of Young China, but too often there was reason to believe that the unseen hand was the insidious hand of Potsdam's agents *in partibus*.

The Military Governors, after accusing the President and Parliament of trying to destroy the responsible Cabinet system, cut short further argument about constitutional principles by nominating a Provisional Government of their own at Tientsin, with Hsü Shih-chang (an amiable septuagenarian, ex-guardian of the Manchu heir-apparent) cast for the dummy rôle of Dictator. President Li's position had now become difficult and dangerous. General Nieh, Military Governor of Anhui, defined it succinctly by stating that he would be allowed to retain office only on condition of submitting to the Military Party

and dissolving Parliament. He added, with curious frankness, that if General Chang Hsün went to Peking, it would not be to make peace between President and Premier, but to restore the Manchus. On June 12, Chang Hsün arrived at the capital, preceded by a "body-guard" of several thousand men. He came ostensibly as mediator, but it was observed that his troops proceeded to occupy the Fengtai railway junction and other strategic points. His mediation proved rapidly effective: on the day after his arrival the President dissolved Parliament by mandate.

No sooner had Chang Hsün emerged as the central figure on the stage than there were signs of trouble and dissension between him and certain of his colleagues in the Military Party. At this juncture, the question of declaring war against Germany was temporarily relegated by common consent to the background of practical politics; public attention became completely engrossed in the clash of personal ambitions at Peking. Tuan Chi-jui remained at Tientsin watching events; a new Premier had been elected by Parliament (Li Ching-hsi, a son of Li Hung-chang), but so far he had declined to assume office and seemed rather disposed to support the action of that section of the Military Party which demanded the reinstatement of Tuan. The leaders of the Kuo-Min tang in the dissolved Parliament had made haste to depart for the South, where the Press was proclaiming an irreparable breach with the North, and the Navy, manned chiefly by southerners, made no secret of its intention to oppose Peking and the Military Governors.

This tangled situation was rendered still more complicated, and the President's anti-war policy temporarily strengthened, by a Note handed to the Chinese Government by the American Minister at Peking on June 6, in which the U.S. Government deplored the growth of internal dissensions in China and intimated that the restoration of national unity and a stable administration was even more important than the declaration of war by

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China against Germany. This advice was morally justified, no doubt, by the facts of the situation; nevertheless, it had several obviously weak points which made it politically unsound. In the first place, it conflicted sharply with the advice tendered from Washington only two months before; in the second, it was calculated (as a Reuter message from Tokyo promptly observed) to accentuate the existing party strife at Peking, for the reason that the President's faction would naturally regard it as an intimation that the U.S. Government was opposed to the policy of Premier Tuan and his adherents. A considerable section of public opinion in Japan regarded this Note as unjustifiable under the circumstances and likely to do more harm than good. The fact that, since his accession to power as Premier, Tuan Chi-jui's policy had been framed and carried out in close touch with Japan, was a factor in the situation that could not be ignored: it was, indeed, Young China's chief political reason for denouncing him and his military supporters. Everything justifies the assumption that Tuan's policy in this matter was largely due to his intelligent observation of the causes that had contributed to the downfall of Yuan Shih-k'ai, and to the prudent advice of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao—to recognition, in fact, of Japan's predominant position in the Far East and of her material interests in China. Sun Yat-sen and his friends of the Kuo-Min tang had frequently recognised that position and those interests, when it suited them to do so, in the past, and most notably when they sought and obtained material assistance from Japan in the revolution of 1911. This, however, did not prevent them now from denouncing Tuan Chi-jui as a tool of the Government at Tokyo and accusing him of having made a secret agreement prejudicial to China with Japan, as the price of her support for the military-monarchist party.

The "mediation" of General Chang Hsün, as events proved, was not intended to promote either the policy of the President or that of the Premier. There was German

money behind him, no doubt, and had his *coup de main* been successful, there would have been little prospect of China's joining the Allies; but his immediate object was the restoration of the Manchu dynasty in the form of a Regency administered by himself as Viceroy of Chihli. During the eighteen days that elapsed between the arrival of his advance guard at the Temple of Heaven and his proclamation of the restoration of the Dragon Throne (July 1), General Chang Hsün continued to mediate, for form's sake, with the President. The result of these *pourparlers* was that, by June 24, Li Ching-hsi had agreed to assume the Premiership for three months, and the President had consented to a conservative re-drafting of the Constitution, a considerable restriction of his own powers, and the election of a new Parliament with reduced membership. These things being settled, the Military Governors of Honan, Shantung, Chihli, and Fengtien agreed to withdraw their troops and rescind their declaration of independence. Things seemed to be shaping towards an amicable settlement in accordance with the wishes of the Military Party; but, as a matter of fact, every inn-keeper and muleteer in Peking knew that something more important than these face-saving negotiations was afoot, and that the Son of Heaven, after five years' dignified detachment in the profound seclusion of his palace, was about to be brought back, and the Dragon Throne restored to its ancient pride of place. There is no possible doubt that the restoration of the Manchu dynasty as a Constitutional Monarchy had been discussed and approved by the Military Governors, including Tuan Chi-jui, at their several conferences at Hsü-chou-fu in 1916; the failure of Chang Hsün's colleagues to support him and the restored Throne in July 1917, was not due to any Republican sympathies on their part, but solely to the fact that Chang Hsün, a blunt, ambitious soldier and no politician, had stolen a march on his associates and could by no means be permitted to reap the fruits thereof. More than one of the dignitaries who pledged

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themselves to support the restoration of the Manchus has since admitted that the plot broke down because of General Chang's insistence on being rewarded with the Viceroyalty of Chihli, a post to which both Tuan Chi-jui and Tsao Kun aspired.

His Majesty, the boy Hsüan Tung and the remnants of the Imperial Manchu family, in the tranquil recesses of the palace, had certainly no hand in the plot. When, after six days of brief eminence (more emphasised in the European and American Press than in his own capital), he returned once more to the enjoyment of the stately dignities and ceremonial etiquette of his Court without a kingdom, the triumphant "Republican" generals published a communication from the Emperor in the *Peking Gazette*, explaining that he, being only a boy, had been unable to prevent General Chang Hsün from issuing edicts in his name, but that the authority of the House of Ching had been wrongfully invoked and abused.

It was on July 1 that, following the precedent for similar *coups d'état* established by Her Majesty the Empress Dowager Tzū-Hsi, General Chang Hsün dragged the reluctant young Emperor from his bed at three o'clock in the morning. Forthwith the city bedecked itself with Dragon flags, by order of the police (the very fact that they were available gives cause for reflection), and within twenty-four hours the old order was peacefully re-established. It has already been said that Chang Hsün was no politician: he now proved it by a tactless assumption of supreme authority, conferring the highest honours in the land indiscriminately and without consulting the recipients, and by assuming that the Military Governors' avowed sympathy for the Monarchy would lead them to support it under his direction. Therein he erred, chiefly because (as *The Times* correspondent justly said) he himself was an "outsider," almost an accident, in the Councils of the Peiyang Military Party. Tuan Chi-jui now emerged from his retirement at Tientsin and promptly put himself at the head of an army determined

to vindicate the Republic and to "exterminate Chang Hsün as a criminal and a robber." In this object he was supported by the Vice-President, Feng Kuo-chang, commanding the Republican army of the south, and by other generals who, as a matter of common knowledge, had all been good, staunch monarchists a year before. Not without justice was Chang Hsün's pathetic plaint for mediation addressed to the Foreign Ministers. When he found himself out-numbered and cornered, he said that, in restoring the Emperor to the Throne, he had acted in complete good faith, hoping to put a stop to the country's internal dissensions, and having every reason to expect support "from his pledged associates, with whom he was now forced to do battle." His troops realised, just as readily as their leader, that there was little advantage to be gained by endeavouring to maintain an untenable position; the defence of the Monarchy was therefore half-hearted and desultory. On July 12 the defenders of the Imperial City capitulated, upon an amicable understanding that they were to receive three months' pay, money down. The total casualties, including a small number amongst the Legation Guards and foreign civilians, amounted to twenty-five killed and forty-five wounded. Before retiring upon his last position in the Imperial City, Chang Hsün had asked the Foreign Legations to mediate, and had threatened, if pushed to extremities, to publish the minutes of one of the conferences at Hsüchow-fu, at which, he said, both Tuan Chi-jui and Feng Kuo-chang had promised to support the restoration of the Manchus. Chang Hsün, after escaping to the refuge of the Dutch Legation, with the help of some of his Austrian friends, was permitted to retire into private life and left in enjoyment of his property.¹

¹ Since the collapse of the Anfu party last summer he has once more emerged, to play a prominent part in Peking politics, as friend and henchman of the great Chang Tso-lin, while Tuan Chi-jui takes his turn in prosperous and dignified retirement. In China, as in England, the fulminations of one party politician against another are usually stage thunder.

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This semi-farcical restoration escapade proved in its conclusion to be a blessing in disguise, inasmuch as it expedited and facilitated the establishment of a strong Cabinet under Tuan Chi-jui (who now returned to resume the Premiership) and practically ensured the declaration of war by China against Germany. President Li Yuan-hung, who had fled for refuge to the Japanese Legation on the proclamation of the Monarchy, finally declined to resume a post for which he had never displayed any inclination or real fitness, and which Tuan Chi-jui triumphant would have made very uncomfortable for him. On July 18 it was announced, to the very general relief of those who feared further internal dissensions, that Vice-President General Feng Kuo-chang had agreed to accept the Presidency, and that he would co-operate in the policy of Premier Tuan. For some days it had also been feared that General Feng, an opportunist of the wait-and-see order, might elect to throw in his lot with Tuan's adversaries, the Kuo-Min tang leaders, and the Navy in the south. The Kuo-Min tang had published a manifesto at Shanghai in which they declared themselves opposed to Tuan, for the same reason which had led them to favour his policy of war against Germany—namely, that they disliked all exponents and supporters of militarism. The Navy had issued a similar document, declaring the Government at Peking to be illegally constituted, and demanding the immediate convocation of Parliament. Had Feng Kuo-chang and his army taken sides with the southerners, Tuan Chi-jui's chances of organising a Central Government would have been problematical. Observers on the spot had reason for grave misgivings on this score, because it was well known that, apart from the chronic jealousies that exist between the Peking and Nanking administrations, there had never been much love lost between Generals Tuan and Feng.

The return to power of Tuan, practically in the position of a Dictator, made it certain that China's diplomatic rupture with Germany would now be followed by a

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declaration of war, involving not only the sequestration of German property and the internment or deportation of German subjects, but also the systematic uprooting of German financial and commercial interests throughout the country. It was not long before the Premier, having formed his Cabinet on conciliatory and moderate lines, gave evidence of his intentions in this matter. Having ascertained General Feng's willingness to accept the Presidency, he informed the Allied Ministers that, upon the latter's arrival in Peking and assumption of office, the Cabinet would proceed to declare war; in the meanwhile, he intimated that it would greatly strengthen his hands if the Allied Powers, in fulfilment of their promises, would make a definite declaration of the financial and other advantages which they were prepared to concede to China. On more than one occasion since March, the representatives of Great Britain, Japan, and the United States had assured the Chinese Government that the Allies would treat China generously as regards the suspension of the Boxer indemnity and the revision of the Customs tariff; and the Chinese, on their side, had expressed their readiness to declare war against Germany without making a specific bargain, relying upon the Allies' promise of fair treatment. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the number of Powers concerned in the indemnity question, and their possibly conflicting interests, it was only natural that Tuan and his supporters should desire, before taking the final and irrevocable step, to receive assurances of a kind that would give confidence to waverers and prevent effective criticism by their opponents. Owing chiefly to the situation in Russia, it was not possible for the Allied Governments, however well disposed, to come quickly to a common understanding in these matters. Recognising this fact, and being urged by the Japanese and British Governments to rely upon the good faith of the Allies, Tuan decided to face the risk of the Kuo-Min tang's opposition, and to proceed to declare war against the Central Powers.

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Feng Kuo-chang arrived in Peking on August 1; his assumption of the Presidency greatly strengthened the position and prestige of the Central Government. A few days before, Sun Yat-sen and his extremist friends had issued a proclamation in Kuangtung, refusing to recognise orders from Peking and proposing that Parliament should meet under a Provisional Government at Canton; but without men or money behind them, the fulminations of the Kuo-Min tang leaders might well be disregarded. The strength of Tuan's position in dealing with the southern revolutionary element and the professional agitators of Young China lay chiefly in his good understanding with the Japanese Government; for the first time since the Russo-Japanese War, the Central Government at Peking might confidently expect the Japanese authorities in China and Japan to discourage any further attempts at treasonable conspiracies and sedition in the central and southern provinces. In this assurance Tuan Chi-jui and his Cabinet proceeded, therefore, to carry out their policy, and on August 3 unanimously resolved on declaring war against the Central Powers. The formal declaration took place on August 14.

Had it not been for the peculiar qualities of jealousy and intrigue which habitually dominate politics in Eastern countries, public opinion, so far as it exists in China, would undoubtedly have brought about the declaration of war at the same time, and for the same reasons, that the United States threw in her lot with the Allies. Internal politics intervened, as has been shown, to prevent this. To a certain extent it may be admitted that President Li Yuan-hung and those who supported his policy of neutrality were influenced by considerations of a prudent and patriotic nature, and unaffected by the atmosphere of intrigue, intimidation, and bribery which emanated from Germany's diplomatic, consular, financial, and secret-service agents. President Li himself, for example, was certainly much influenced by fear of the effects of the revolution in Russia, a fear which he frankly confessed,

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and which outweighed in his judgment the help which the Allies might expect to receive from the United States. But, broadly speaking, the opposition to President Tuan's war policy was due to German instigation, and maintained by a considerable expenditure of German money.

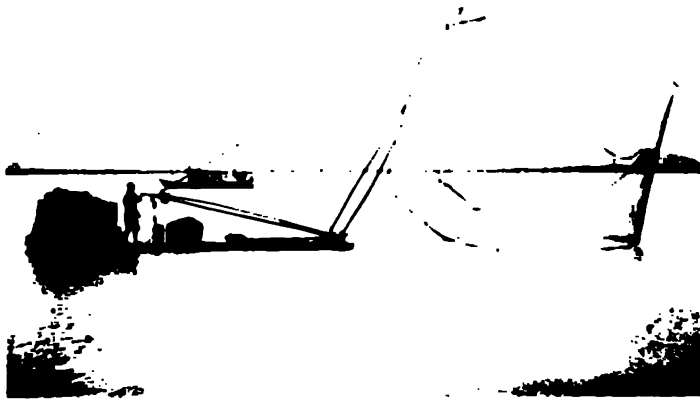
The last manifestation of internal politics with which Tuan Chi-jui had to contend, viz. Chang Hsün's *coup d'état*, was undoubtedly "made in Germany." As events proved, however, it turned out to the advantage both of Premier Tuan and of the Allies, who desired to see China closed to the activities of German agents. So long as the President and the Premier at Peking were divided in counsel, there could be no hope of establishing anything in the nature of a strong Central Government, in which lay China's only hope of peaceful progress and stability. Chang Hsün's blundering attempt to restore the Manchus enabled Tuan Chi-jui to make a fresh start, with every prospect of financial solvency and of assistance from the Powers best able to give the Central Government effective support, moral and material.

By an agreement between the Consortium banks at Peking (excluding the German) it was arranged, upon China's declaration of war, that the Chinese Government should receive an immediate loan of 10,000,000 *yen* for general administrative purposes, secured against the Salt Gabelle revenues. The Chinese Government, having many claims to meet at home and abroad, would have liked to borrow on a much larger scale, but in their own interests they were advised that, with exchange at its then high level, it would be folly to do so. As the result of the war in Europe, and of China's participation therein, she was now placed in a financial position which, had it been wisely and honestly handled, would soon have enabled her to recover complete stability. Her internal resources were increased and her foreign obligations reduced. Under these conditions, it was to be hoped that the Allies would agree to discourage the Chinese Government from any further dalliance on the primrose path of borrowing,



B. T. Pridoux

ASCENDING THE RAPIDS, HWEI RIVER, CHEKIANG.



B. T. Pridoux

A FISHERMAN OF THE WHANGPOO.

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and urge them to take advantage of the existing most favourable conditions to set their house in order and to make timely provision for emergencies, to tabulate and regulate all internal loans and financial claims; above all, to take steps for the disbandment of irregular armed forces in the provinces and the centralisation of military authority in a national army under the Ministry of War. As will be shown hereafter, no matter how great the country's resources, they can never be sufficient for its needs so long as independent bodies of troops are allowed to levy taxes on their own account and to claim payment for making (or for not making) attacks on the established order of things. Coincident with the elimination of Germany, chief mischief-maker, China had an opportunity, such as she had never enjoyed before, for working out her own salvation. She had a fair field and much favour; a splendid and unexpected opportunity for proving to the world, without let or hindrance, Young China's capacity for efficient self-determination and patriotic effort. But this opportunity has been lost, frittered away in futile strife, consumed by the greed and inefficiency of politicians of all professions, old and new. To what a state they have since brought the finances and administration of the country is matter of common knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPUBLIC OF TO-DAY

DURING the winter of 1919-1920 I made a rapid journey through North China, Manchuria, Korea, and Japan. The sole purpose of this journey was to investigate on the spot the changes brought about by the World War and by recent political events in these countries; to discuss the situation in all its bearings with the men best qualified to take a broad-minded view of its facts and needs; and finally to offer, if possible, through the Press, some practical suggestions with a view to averting the immediate dangers which threaten China from within and without. Beyond my duty to *The Times* and certain other newspapers, I had no mission, nor received any remuneration whatsoever, from any quarter. Having no political objects to serve, I may claim to have studied the situation, if not with impartiality, at least with complete independence, and to set forth the truth, as I see it, without fear or favour. But not without affection, for I must plead guilty to very sincere feelings of kindly sympathy for the long-suffering and lovable Chinese people, amongst whom the best years of my life have been spent.

I make no apology for this personal statement, for the reason that the vernacular Press controlled by Young China at the Treaty Ports, and especially the organs of its irreconcilable malcontents at Canton, have been at pains to declare that my opinions on the situation were untrustworthy, because I was "in the paid service of a certain foreign Power whose militaristic policy is antagonistic to the national aspirations of the Young China party"—meaning, thereby, Japan. Referring particularly to my views on the ever-thorny subject of centralised

finance, as reported at an interview in Shanghai, the *Chung hua Pao* characteristically observed that they were inspired by the hope of obtaining a lucrative post as financial controller at Peking. Scurrilous falsehoods of this kind are unfortunately common currency amongst the hot-headed and half-educated youths who now claim to represent and guide public opinion in China; and one cannot afford to ignore them entirely, because the utterances of these journals, which live by and for agitation and sedition, are widely circulated abroad, by means of the "Asiatic News Agency," and thus achieve a fictitious importance, especially in the United States. On my return from the East, *via* America, I found at San Francisco unmistakable evidence of the far-reaching influence of this poisonous Press work.

The wrath of the Cantonese politicians and of their jackals of the Press was aroused on this occasion by the public expression of my firm belief—a belief which is now widely shared by responsible Chinese and foreigners throughout the East—that, unless a way can be found to make the provinces sink their differences and unite in patriotic support of a centralised government, nothing but international control of the country's finances can save China from bankruptcy and disruption. I had also declared my conviction that nothing had done more to prevent the restoration of political equilibrium of law and order, under a strong central authority, than the ascendancy in public affairs of the student class, and particularly that undisciplined section of it which combines crude ideas of Republicanism with a smattering of Western science. To any one who is not blinded by sentimental delusions or self-interest, the course of events during the past five years has brought home the obvious fact that unless a stable and effective government can be established speedily at Peking, foreign control of China's finances is inevitable, in China's own interest. And since the passing of Yuan Shih-k'ai, the hope of establishing such a government has become more remote

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with each passing year. The vision of a New China, regenerate and invigorated by means of democratic institutions, so widely proclaimed after the triumph of the revolution, was a delusion for which the Chinese were less to blame than the foreigners in their midst, who inspired and encouraged it. That vision was bound to prove a mirage, for the simple reason that the instinct and capacity for representative government is still lacking in the Chinese people.

Since it is the Cantonese section of Young China which is ever loudest and most insistent in proclaiming its own virtues and demanding sympathy for its political programmes, let us cast a passing glance at the present condition of the two Kuang provinces, those fruitful breeding-grounds of unrest and rebellion, and, lest we be charged with prejudice in the matter, let us take the evidence of a Cantonese observer, who has described the situation in a recent contribution to the *North China Herald* (October 2, 1920). The story which he tells, an Oriental version of the tale of the Kilkenny Cats, might be told with equal force of many other provinces, for at present there are five uncrowned kings fighting for the mastery in China. But the Cantonese leaders of Young China, the highly vocal Americanised section which has produced men like Tang Shao-yi, Sun Yat-sen, Wen Tsung-yao, and Wellington Koo, insist so eloquently upon the glorious future which awaits their country (under their guidance) when a lawfully-elected Parliament gets to work under the right kind of Constitution, that the present condition of the people in Kuangtung and Kuangsi is particularly deserving of attention. For at Canton the Republicans and the Reformers, the Parliamentarians and Constitution-makers, have had practically a free hand since Yuan expelled them and the Kuo-Min tang from Peking. When Canton became a law unto herself, those staunch Republicans, Wu Ting-fang, Sun Yat-sen, and Tang Shao-yi, had a chance of proving to a sympathetic world that, here at least, it

was possible for the Chinese to organise a system of representative government based on honest administration. Theirs was the opportunity, while all the world was at war, of proving, by practical performance, that capacity for efficient self-government which they had so often asserted on the platform and in the Press; this was the time to justify their demand for the abolition of extra-territoriality, by an object-lesson of wise and honest administration. What the actual results of their leadership have been, may be told in the words of the Cantonese writer :

"To put the whole subject in a nutshell, the Kuangtung troops under General Chen, who, by the way, is himself a Cantonese, are trying their utmost to evict the Kuangsi-ites. General Chen—like General Tan Yen-kai, the Hunan General who was successful in driving out the bandit chief, Chang Chin-yao, from Hunan, and thus secured the freedom of his province—is trying to free his fellow-provincials from despotism, and thus make way for self-government and liberty.

"Kuangtung, which has always been reputed to be the most progressive and most prosperous province in China, is alleged to have been reduced to poverty and to a state of debt amounting to not less than \$50,000,000, simply because of the misrule, the avarice, the corruption, and the incompetency of the Kuangsi party in Kuangtung, in spite of the fact that they have bled the province of every cash by all kinds of illegal methods.

"Since their entry into Kuangtung under the cloak of 'defenders of the Constitution,' the Kuangsi militarists, numbering more than 50,000 troops, are said to have imposed illegal taxes, licensed disorderly and gambling houses, forced the planting of poppy, allowed the smuggling of opium and the selling and smoking of the drug, permitted the smuggling of arms by robber bands, and so forth. Well-tried officials have been removed from office, and where one competent man was enough in former days, fifty incompetent men are used nowadays—all hangers-on of the Kuangsi party. And, moreover, the salary of one official in former days is multiplied not less than thirty times under the rule of Kuangsi. Archives

precious to the hearts of the Cantonese are said to have been stolen. The machinery from the Arsenal and the Mint has been removed. The funds of the Treasury are missing. Books of the public libraries have been taken away and the shelves are left bare. All has been taken away. Where?—To Kuangsi.

"Progressive enterprises have been interfered with. Government schools have not received their annual appropriations, and many were thus forced to close. Civil affairs, which were left in the hands of a few military men, were forced to go begging, while military expenditure—not to mention troops—has increased by leaps and bounds. Newspapers were closed simply because they voiced public opinion. Editors were taken out and summarily shot without being accorded a hearing and without being allowed to defend themselves or to secure the services of legal counsel to defend them—and there are supposed to be law courts in the province. The district of Kinchow was cut off from Kuangtung and annexed to Kuangsi in spite of the protests of the Cantonese.

"All of these misdeeds have occurred since the break-up of the Military Government. General Tsen Chun-shüan, who was the only member of the Military Government left in Canton, joined with Lu Yung-ting against the Cantonese people, who have always followed the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. In order that he might gain the sympathy of the Cantonese, he enlisted the services of Mr. Wen Tsung-yao, a Cantonese official in the north, and a man full of promise, and Dr. Chen Chin-tao, former Minister of Finance, to aid him. Wen and Chen were only tools, however, in the hands of the militarists, who remained as arrogant as ever.

"The problem of the Cantonese, therefore, was to drive out of their province Generals Tsen and Mu Yung-hsien, the latter being the Kuangsi Tuchun of Kuangtung, as well as Wen and Chen, and to rid the province of the Kuangsi bandit-troops. Once this was done, Kuangsi influence in the province would have been broken.

"The next problem of the Cantonese, after regaining their province, is to defeat the Kuangsi-ites in their own province and drive out Lu Yung-ting, the bandit Inspector-General who is responsible for all the trouble. Unless this man is driven from power, they will constantly be in danger of his recovering strength and attacking them

once more. With this bandit in power there can be no peace in China, say the Cantonese. He will ever remain a thorn in their side.

"It might be mentioned that although neither 'side' has a dollar, some of the individual Kuangsi-ites have amassed fortunes amounting to millions of dollars. Lu Yung-ting is said to have some \$30,000,000 buried in the earth in his village near Nanning, Kuangsi. In his peace proposals he has openly stated that he is willing to make any kind of peace provided he be allowed to keep these ill-gotten gains."

Now, the men who are chiefly responsible for this state of affairs (which, in greater or less degree, now prevails throughout China) are the professional politicians who came to the front at the time of the revolution—the men whose message, proclaimed to the ends of the earth, declared that, when once the Republic was established, a new era of peace and progress would dawn and China take her rightful place among the great nations. It is important to remember this, because to-day a new generation of Young China is coming to the front, professing the same lofty aims and patriotic fervour as those which distinguished the utterances of Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary colleagues, and once more we are asked to believe that, if only their hands can be strengthened and their plans fulfilled, all will be well with China. "Let only the Dragon Throne be abolished," said Young China in 1911, "and we will show you how the country should be governed." To-day the *dramatis personæ* have changed, but the play is ever the same. "Let only the Militarist Government be abolished," says Young China; "only give us a chance to show what government should be, and all will be well." But to look for salvation from this quarter, to believe in a Chinese world suddenly made free for democracy, one must find justification for the belief that the Western-learning student of to-day is likely to bring to the conduct of public affairs a mind and methods different from those of his

immediate predecessors. What grounds are there for any such belief?

As a matter of fact, Young China, being highly intelligent, knows very well that the root of the trouble in China is in no sense militarism; the catchword has been adopted from Europe by the politicians in order to invest a very sordid struggle with some semblance of moral purpose. Men of the class of C. T. Wang and Wellington Koo are perfectly well aware of the fact that such Government as exists in China to-day is conducted not on militarist, but on purely mercenary principles. They know that the "Constitutional" battle-cry of the "Outs" is the emptiest make-believe, and that there has never been any real difference of political principles at issue between the warring factions, north or south, east or west. They know that those who administer the Government at Peking and in the provinces are merely groups of predatory officials, true to type in the matter of "squeeze," but far more rapacious than of old, because of the absence of the restraining authority of the Throne.

Let us face the simple truth, which Young China's record of the past eight years has repeatedly emphasised, namely, that one thing, and one thing only, prevents the establishment of a stable Central Government at Peking, and this is the insatiable greed of money which possesses every Chinese who attains to public office. Take, for example, the record of the so-called Republican leaders who came to the front in 1911. Those who rose to high office as Tutchuns, speedily proved that a mandarin by any other name is still a mandarin. Almost without exception they proceeded to amass great fortunes at all costs and all speed. In the words of the *North China Daily News* (always a well-disposed observer), "Chinese officialdom under the so-called democracy has become more irresponsible and more flagrantly venal than ever before. Its special activities have been directed to the business of recruiting private forces with

public money and of selling the power thus acquired to the highest bidder." Thus in China, as in Russia and Mexico, we see once more the truth demonstrated that the type of a social structure can never be changed by a political revolution. As Spencer says, "Out of the nominally free government set up, a new despotism arises, differing only from the old by having a new shibboleth and new men to utter it, but identical with the old in the determination to put down opposition and in the means used to this end."

Young China to-day, as in 1911, loudly proclaims its patriotic integrity of purpose and capacity for honest work in the public service; but the fact remains (and the Chinese themselves admit it) that it is not possible to name a dozen men in all the ranks of the bureaucracy, old or new, whose record would command implicit confidence in the matter of disinterested, clean-handed administration. It is because of the lack of such men, and the impossibility of reorganising a stable Government without them, that the great majority of patriotic, non-official Chinese have come to the conclusion that the country's best chance of regaining stability and security lies in placing the national finances, as a whole, under some form of foreign supervision. And the machinery for this supervision is already in existence; all that is required is gradually to extend the system of administration which has proved so beneficial as applied to the Maritime Customs, the Salt Gabelle, and the Postal Service.

During my recent visit to China, I discussed this question with officials of all classes, with those in office and those in comfortable retirement, with leading representatives of the serious-minded section of Young China, with merchants, bankers, and scholars; and everywhere, from the immediate vicinity of the Presidential mansion at Peking to the guilds and compradores of the Treaty Ports, I found a very general recognition of the truth that, left to itself, the country does not possess sufficient

elements of constructive statesmanship to put an end to the chaos and corruption now prevailing. Amongst the highest officials at the capital and in the provinces, many were prepared to admit, in private conversation, that in foreign intervention lies China's only hope of putting an end to the pernicious activities of the political adventurers and freebooters who have made of civil war a lucrative industry. The list which I could make of the men who have confessed to this belief would be interesting and instructive. It cannot be published, however, for, since the students at Peking expressed their dissatisfaction with the Versailles Treaty last May by burning the house of Tsao Ju-lin and insisting on his dismissal from the Cabinet, officialdom goes in deadly fear of openly opposing their political opinions. One of the most marked characteristics of the Chinese is their extraordinary readiness to submit to intimidation by their own countrymen. It is a characteristic which, in the case of Peking's officials, has been intensified by the elimination of the Throne as a rallying-point for authority, and also by their natural anxiety, as rich men, to incur no avoidable risks, in a world full of perils of change. Let but the *yaméns* be disturbed by whisperings of some new plot, such as General Chang Hsün's escapade of 1917, and straightway long lines of carts, laden with the portable wealth of the mandarins, make their way from the houses of the great to the refuge of the banks and battlements of the Legation quarter. In the natural timidity of the officials and merchants lies the real secret of much of the extraordinary influence of the student class in China to-day. And the student knows it.

The increasing authority of the student class as a factor in the politics of the Republic is a phenomenon in itself as significant as the unparalleled wealth accumulated by the official class during the past eight years, while Europe and Japan have been besieged for loans by the Government drifting ever nearer and nearer to